HANDEL

ODE ON ST CECILIA'S DAY

M. Kelle

NOVELLO



HANDEL

Ode on St Cecilia's Day

for soprano & tenor soli, SATB & orchestra

words by John Dryden

NOVELLO

Borough Green Sevenoaks Kent

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HISTORICAL NOTES.

The earliest known musical celebration of St. Cecilia's Day (November 22) was held at Evereux, in France, in the year 1571. More than a century elapsed, however, before St. Cecilia was similarly honoured in England. For the "Feast," as it was called, in 1683—the first held in this country—three odes were written, two in English and one in Latin. All three were set to music by Henry Purcell, but only one appears to have been publicly performed.

John Dryden (1631-1700) wrote two odes in honour of the patroness of music and musicians—"A Song for St. Cecilia's Day," in 1687, and, in 1697, "Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music." Both these odes were subsequently set to music by Handel. The text of the first of these, forming that of the present publication, originally appeared printed on a broadside headed:

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687. | Written | By John Dryden, Esq.; and Compos'd by Mr. John Baptist Draghi.

The imprint reads: "Printed by T. Dring, in Fleetstreet, 1687." Draghi's setting has not been published, but copies of the work are preserved in the library of the Royal College of Music, and there is an imperfect copy at the British Museum.

Handel was fifty-four years old when he set the first of Dryden's St. Cecilian odes to music. The autograph score, preserved in the Royal Music Library, Buckingham Palace, bears the following dates:

Ouverture to the Song for St. Cecilia's Day. ede by Mr. Dryden 1687. Begun Sept. 15. 1739. | h Fine. G. F. Handel. | Septembr 24. 1739. |)

This was the first work in which Handel used the old astrological signs in dating his autograph scores, a custom which he afterwards continued to the end of his life. The manuscript shows some slight though interesting changes. Seven bars of soft music are eliminated from the first movement of the overture; and the time-signature of "The trumpet's loud clangour" was originally §. The March is headed "La Marche." At the beginning of the solos Handel has written the names of the principal singers who took part in the first performance—Signora Francesina and Mr. Beard.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

The production of the work was advertised in the London Daily Post and General Advertiser of November 22, 1739 (St. Cecilia's Day), as follows:

LINCOLNS INN FIELDS.

At the Theatre-Royal in Lincolns Inn Fields, this Day, November 22, (being St. Cecilia's Day) will be perform'd

An Ode of Mr. Dryden's,

With two new Concerto's for several Instruments.

Which will be preceded by ALEXANDER'S FEAST.

And a Concerto on the Organ.

Boxes Half a Guinea. Pit 5s. First Gallery 3s. Upper Gallery 2s.

** Particular Care has been taken to have the House well-air'd; and the Passage from the Fields to the House will be cover'd for better Conveniency.

Box Tickets will be sold this Day at the Stage-Door.

Pit and Gallery Doors will be open'd at Four, the Boxes at Five.

To begin at Six o'Clock.

It will be observed that Handel's name, as composer of the music, does not appear in the above announcement; indeed, in the earliest advertisement, Dryden's name is also suppressed, "A new ode"—not "new" as regards the words—being the only information given as to the identity of the work. In the advertisement of November 17, the word "warm" appears instead of "well-air'd" in respect of the condition of the "House."

The Ode was performed six times during the winter of 1739-40, in spite of the fact that this was the "hard winter." The frost lasted nine weeks, when coaches plied upon the Thames, and festivities and diversions of all kinds were enjoyed on the ice-bound river. No wonder, therefore, that Handel caused the following information to be added to the advertisement (February 13, 1740) of his performances at Lincoln's Inn Theatre:

Particular Care has been taken to have the House survey'd and secur'd against the Cold, by having Curtains plac'd before every Door, and constant Fires will be kept in the House 'till the Time of Performance.

Although this is the first St. Cecilian ode written by Dryden, it is the second by that poet which Handel set to music. It was preceded by "Alexander's Feast," composed in 1736. Mozart wrote, in June, 1790, additional accompaniments to the "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," as he did to the "Messiah," "Acis and Galatea," and "Alexander's Feast." Except the "Messiah"—of which the location is unknown—the autographs of Mozart's orchestration of the above works by Handel are preserved in the Royal Library, Berlin.

F. G. E.

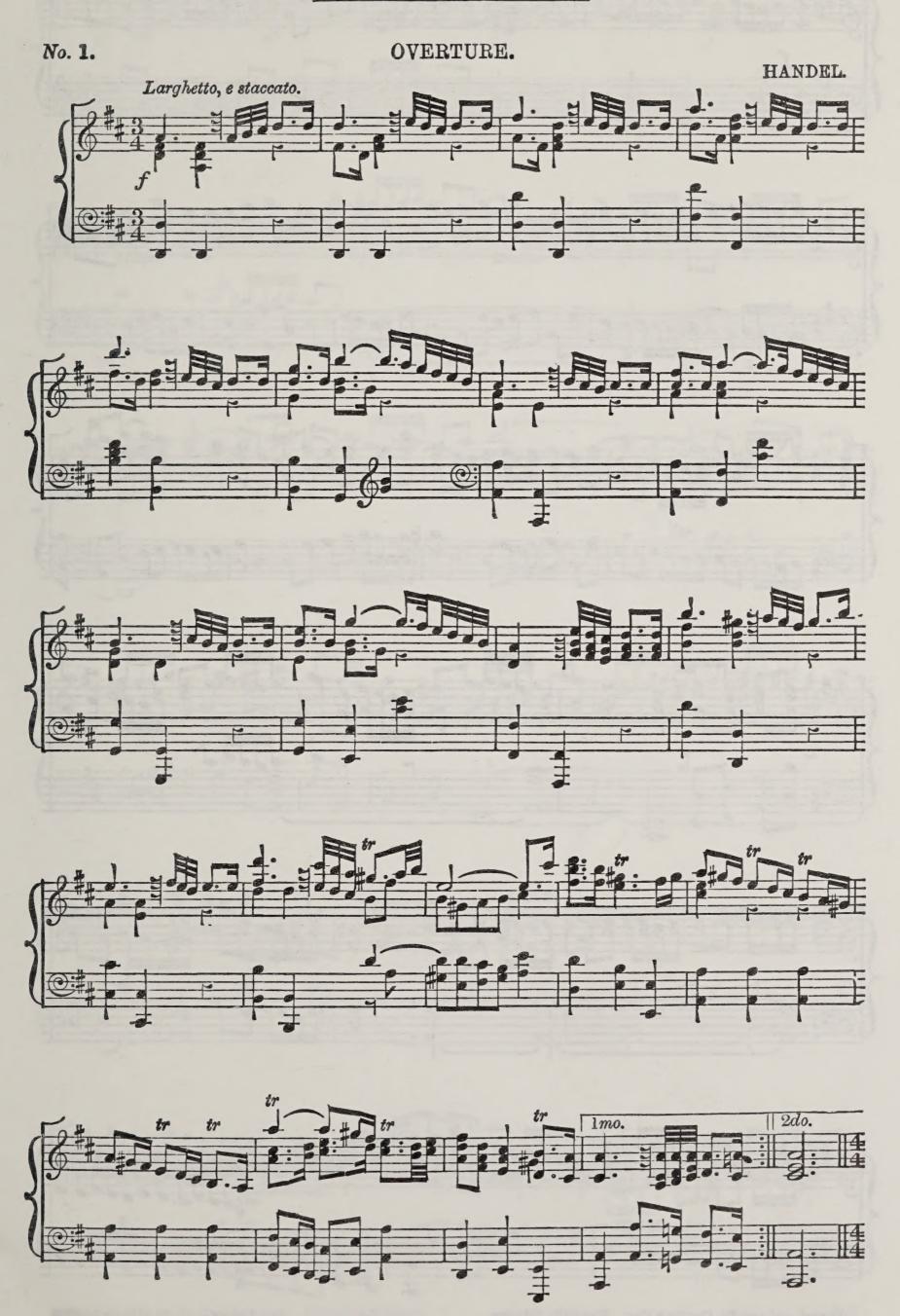
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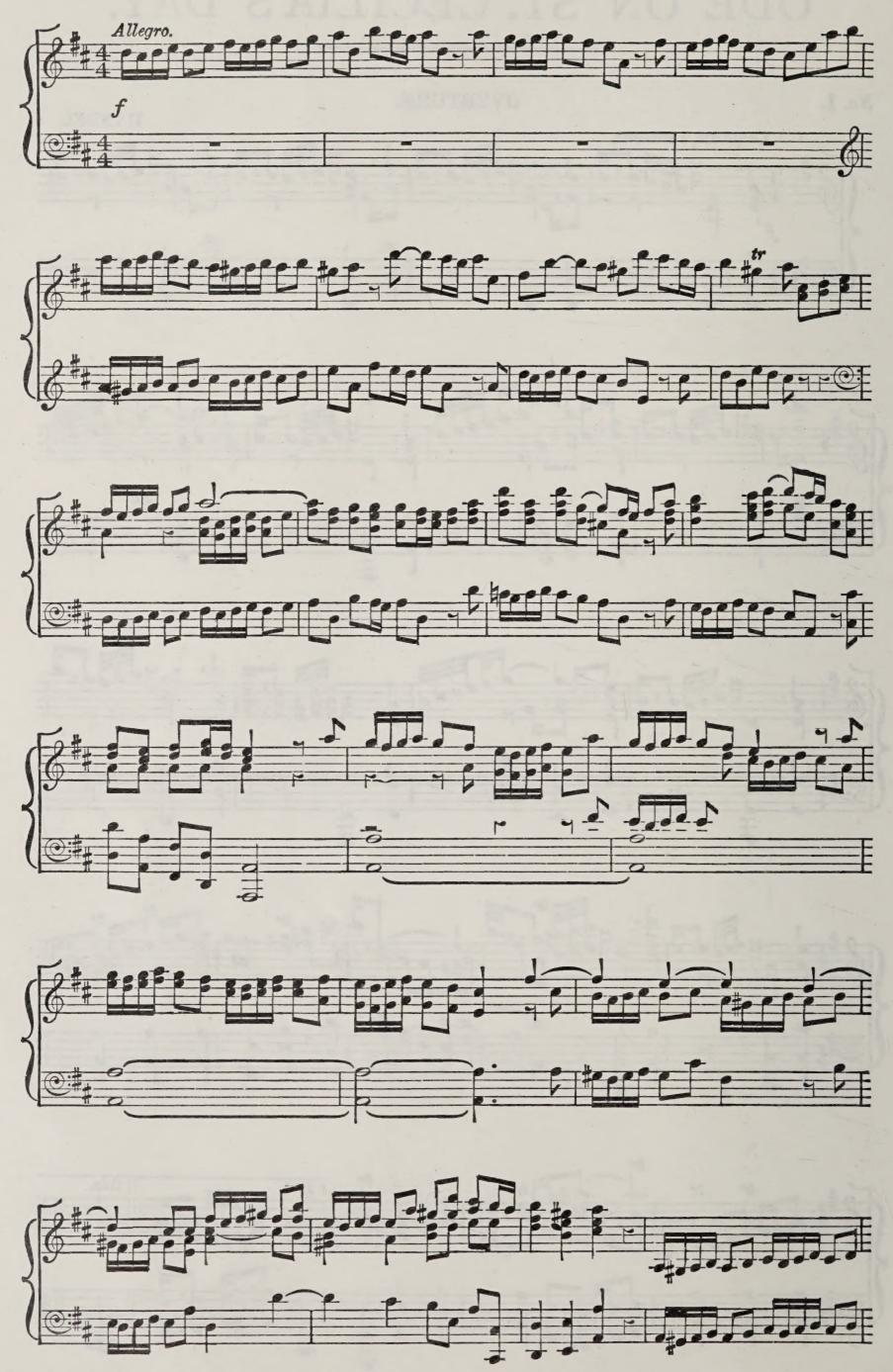
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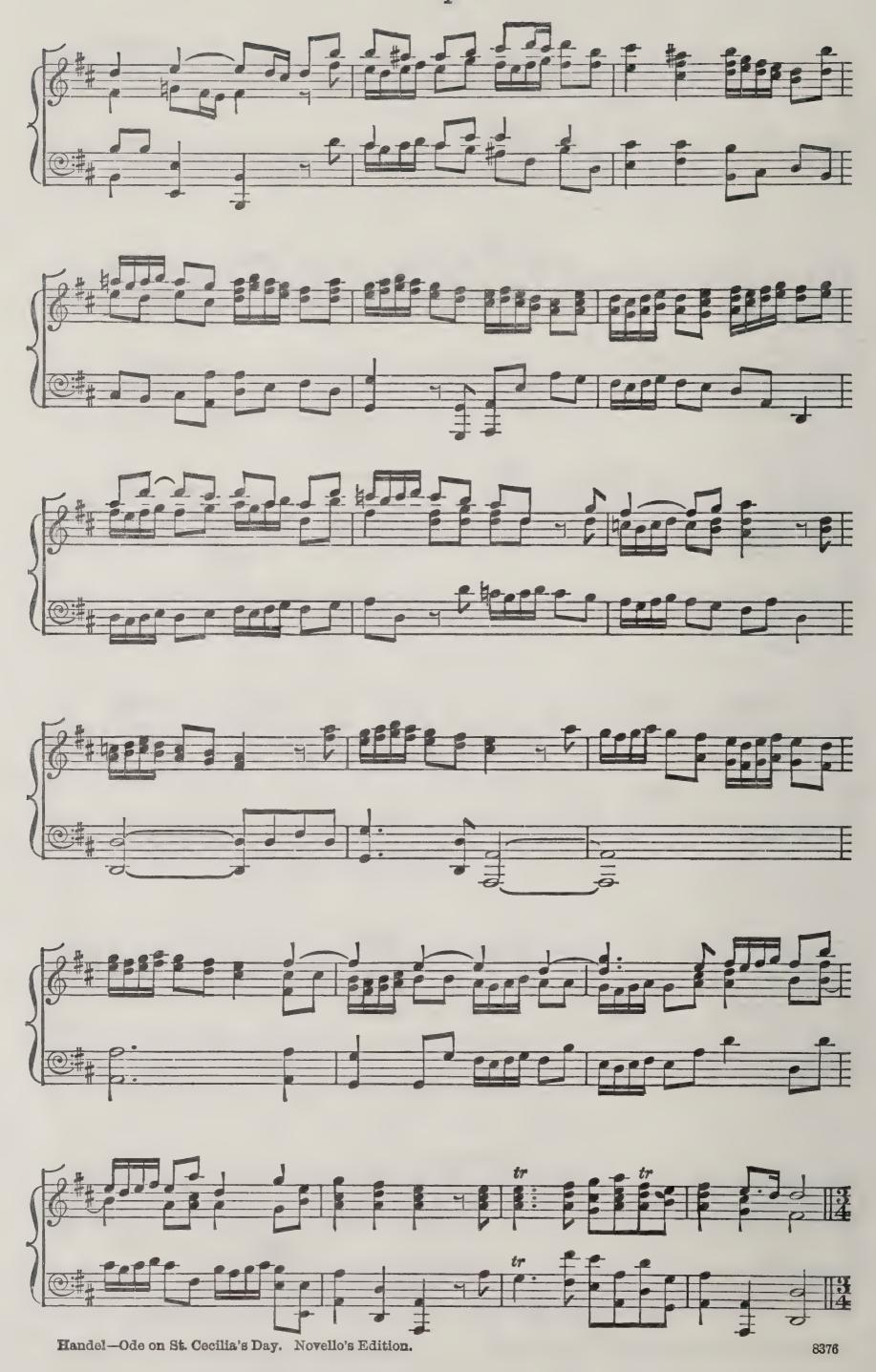
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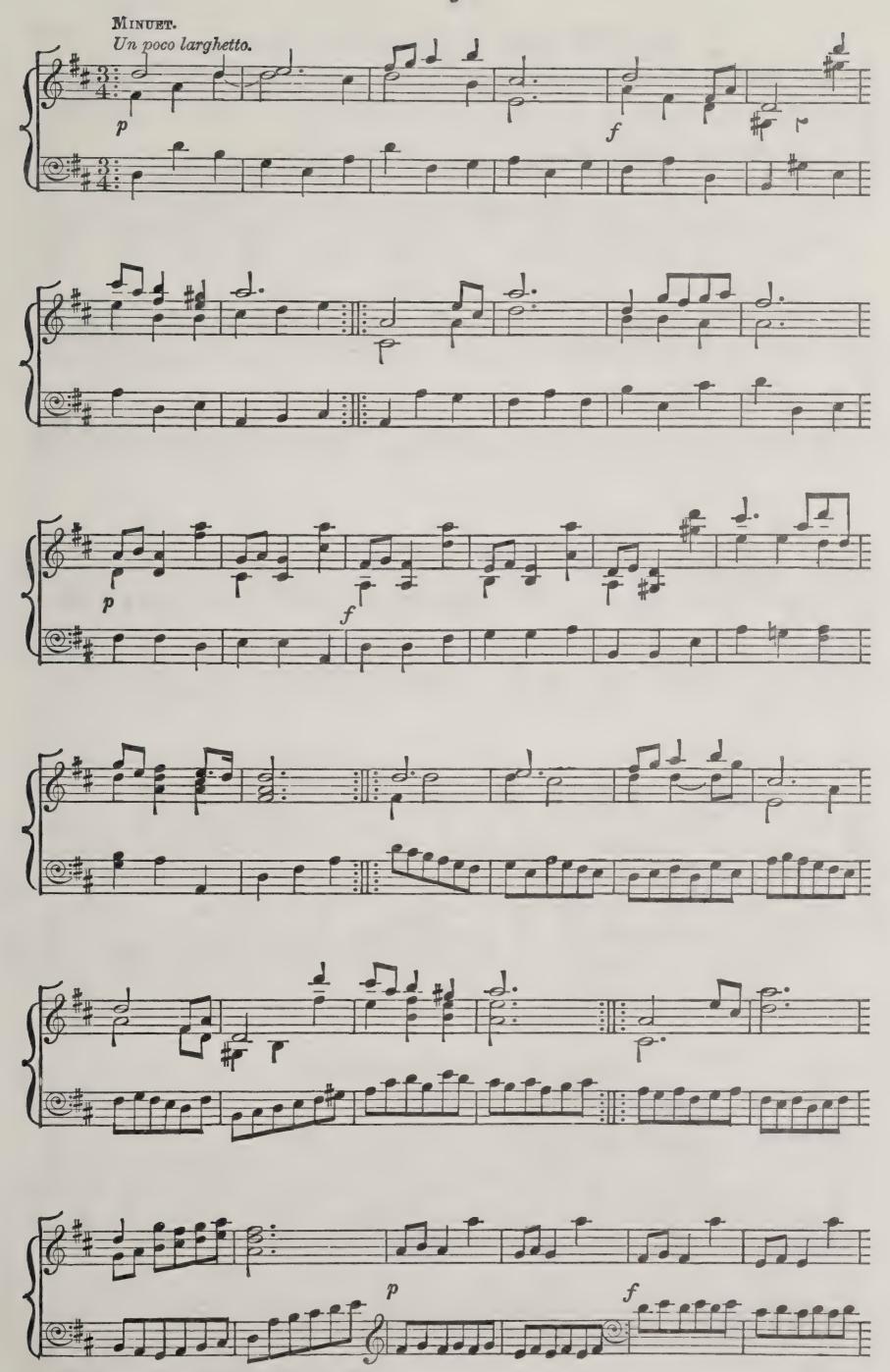
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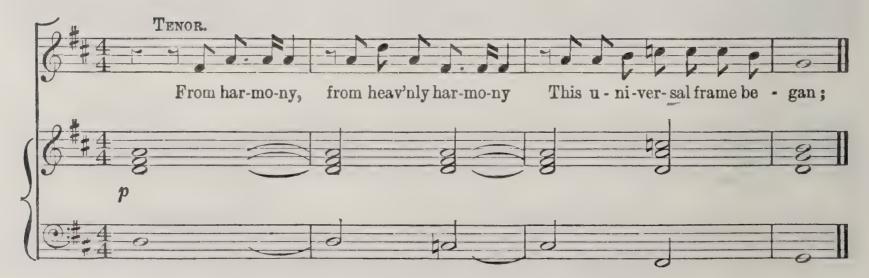






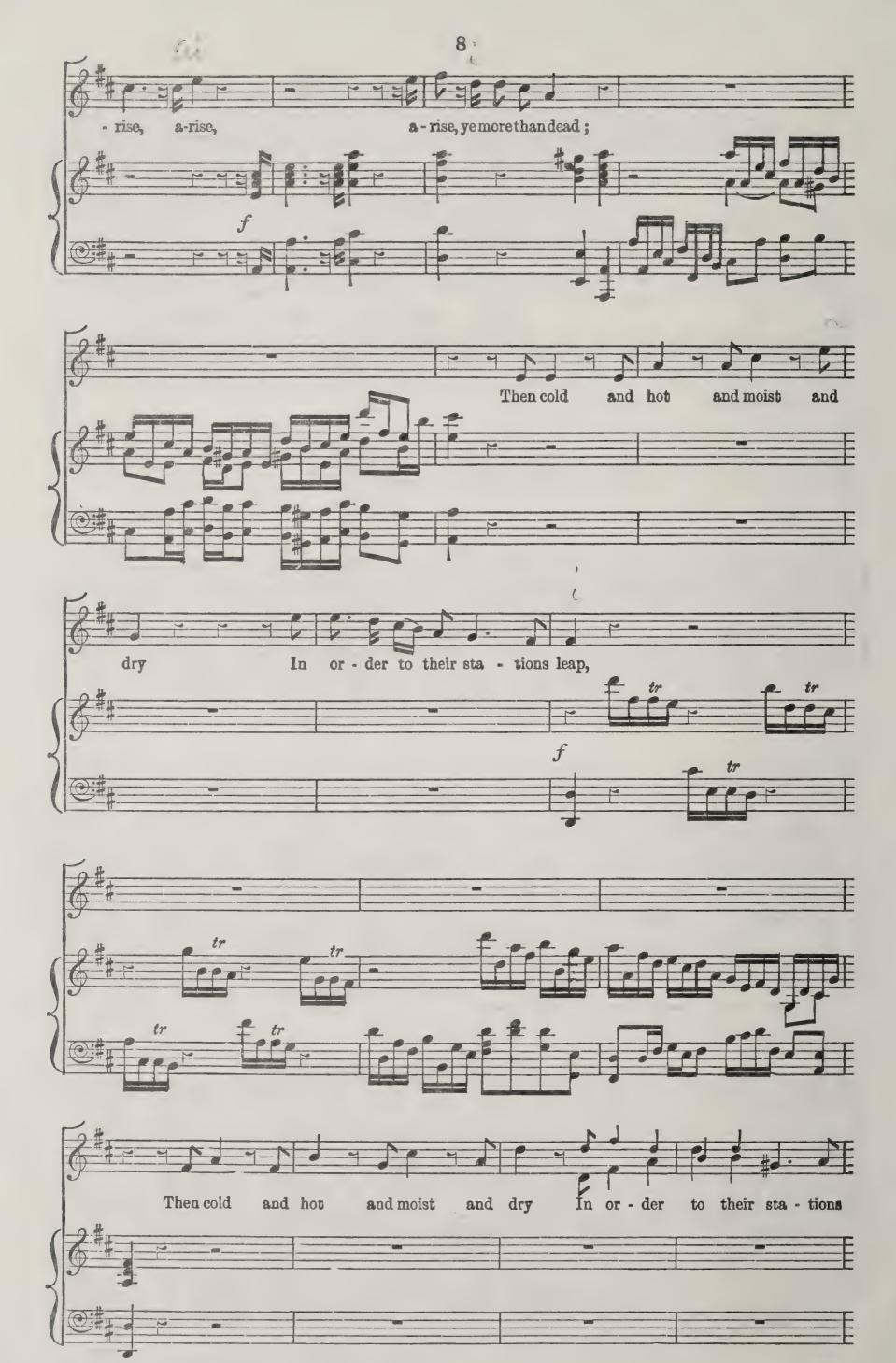


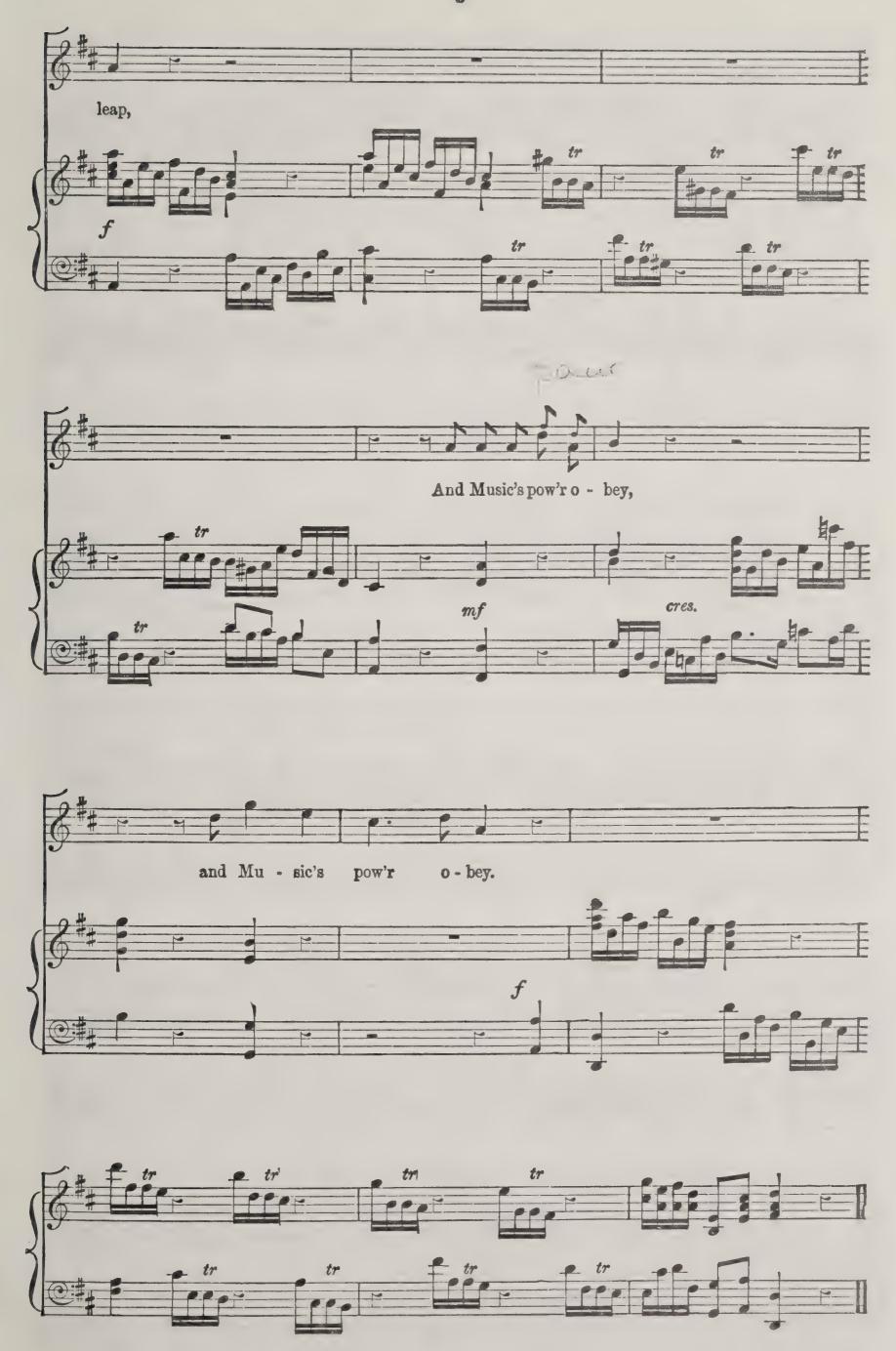
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CHORUS.—"FROM HARMONY."





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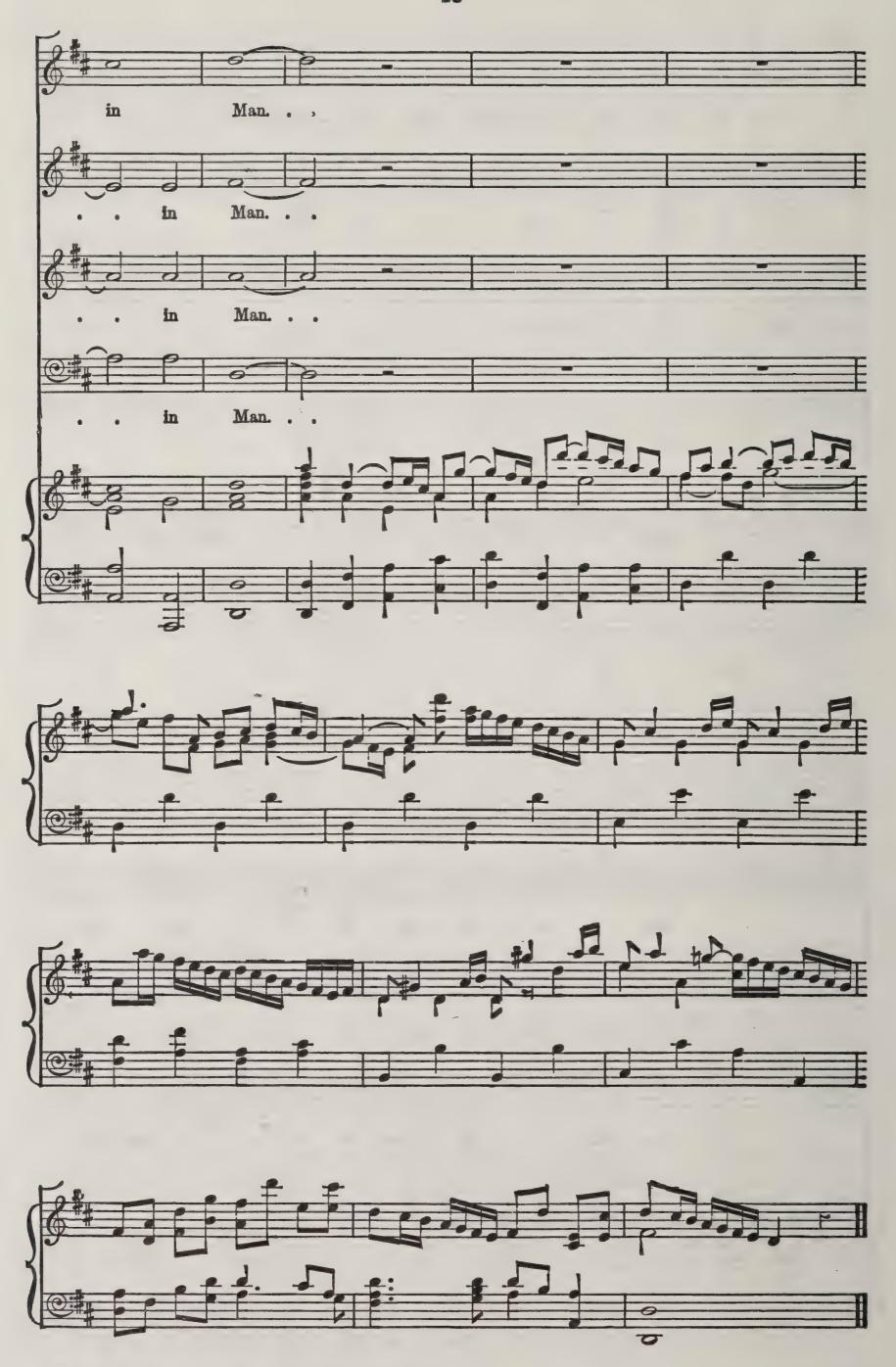






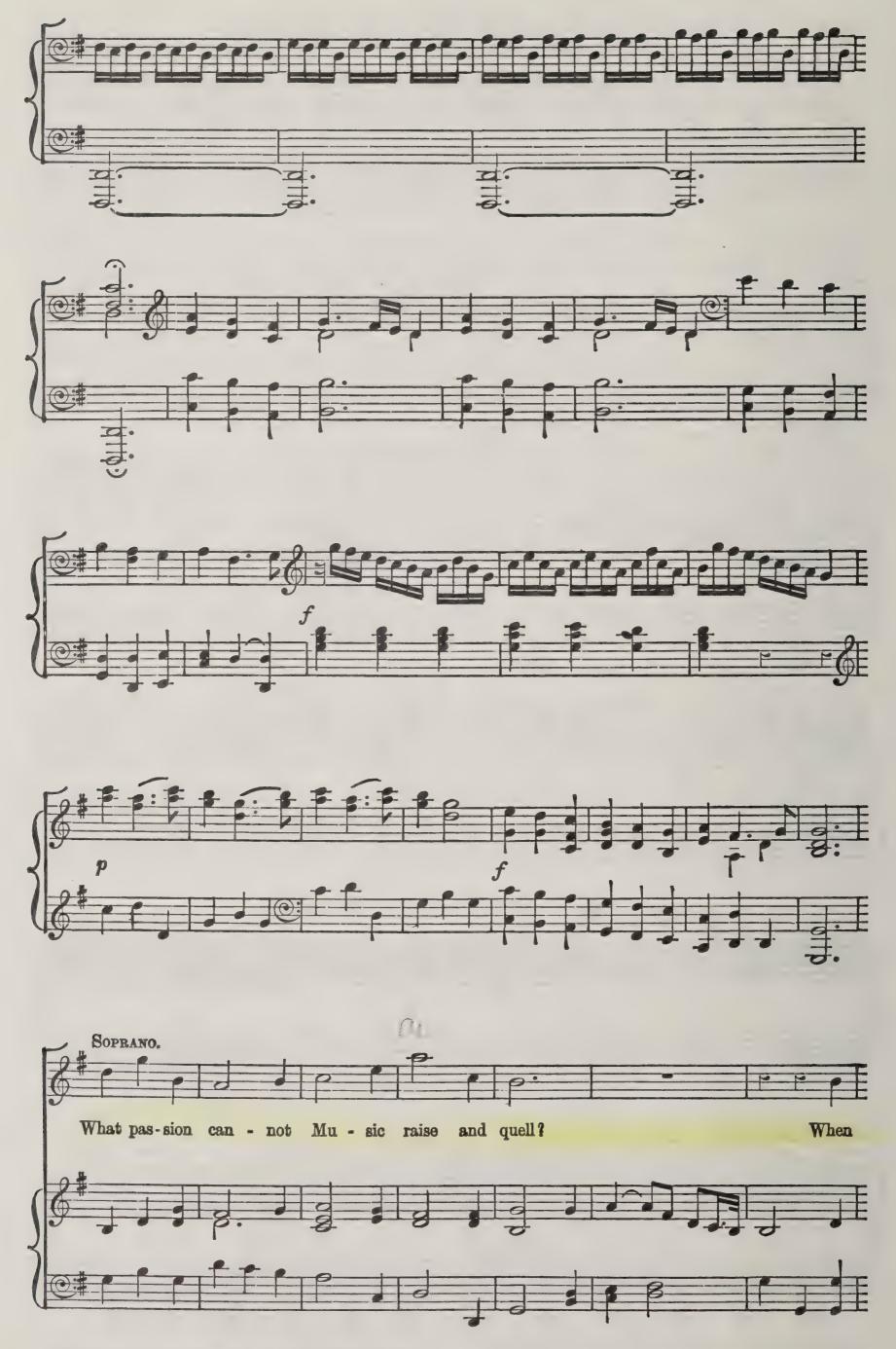


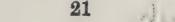






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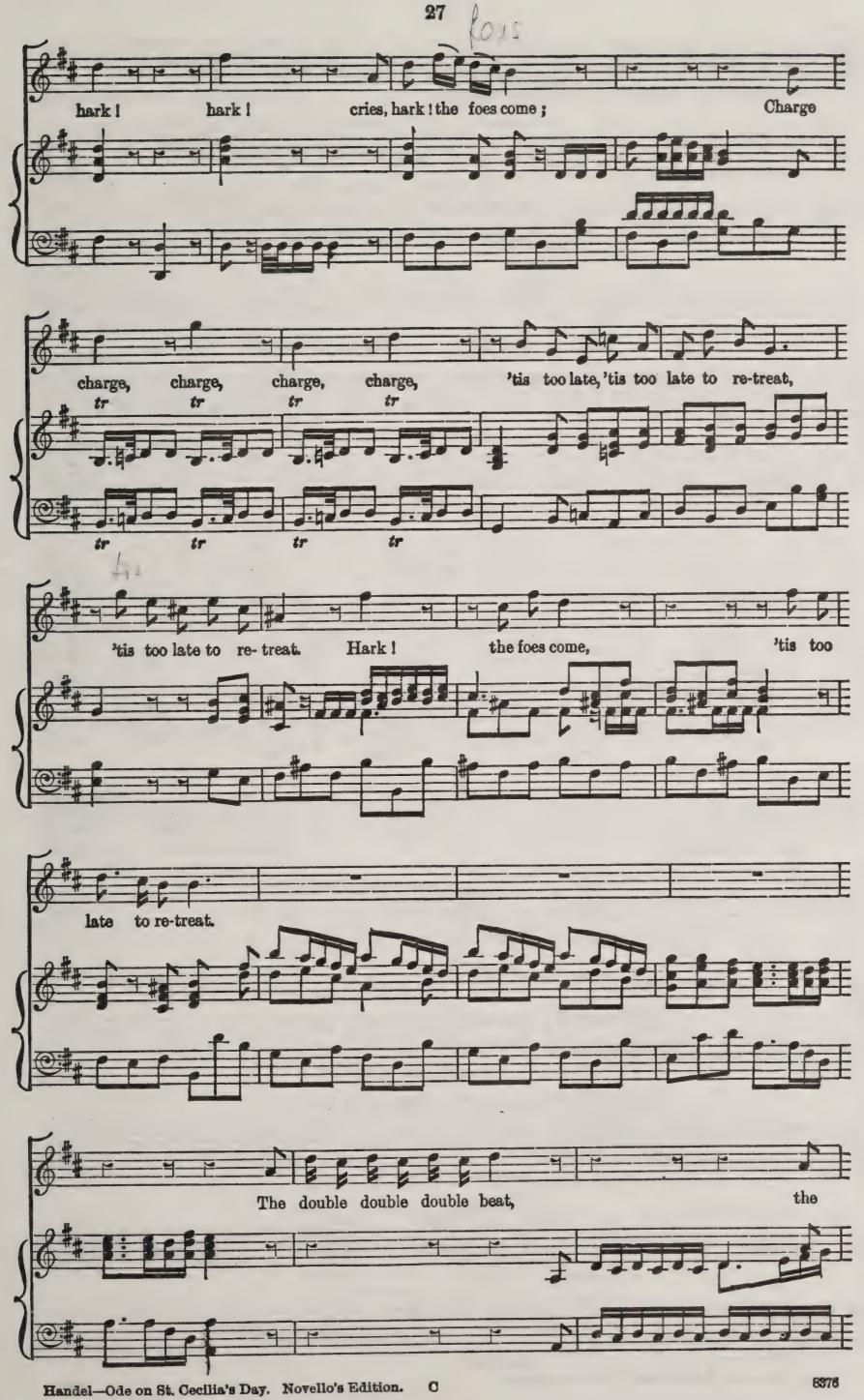




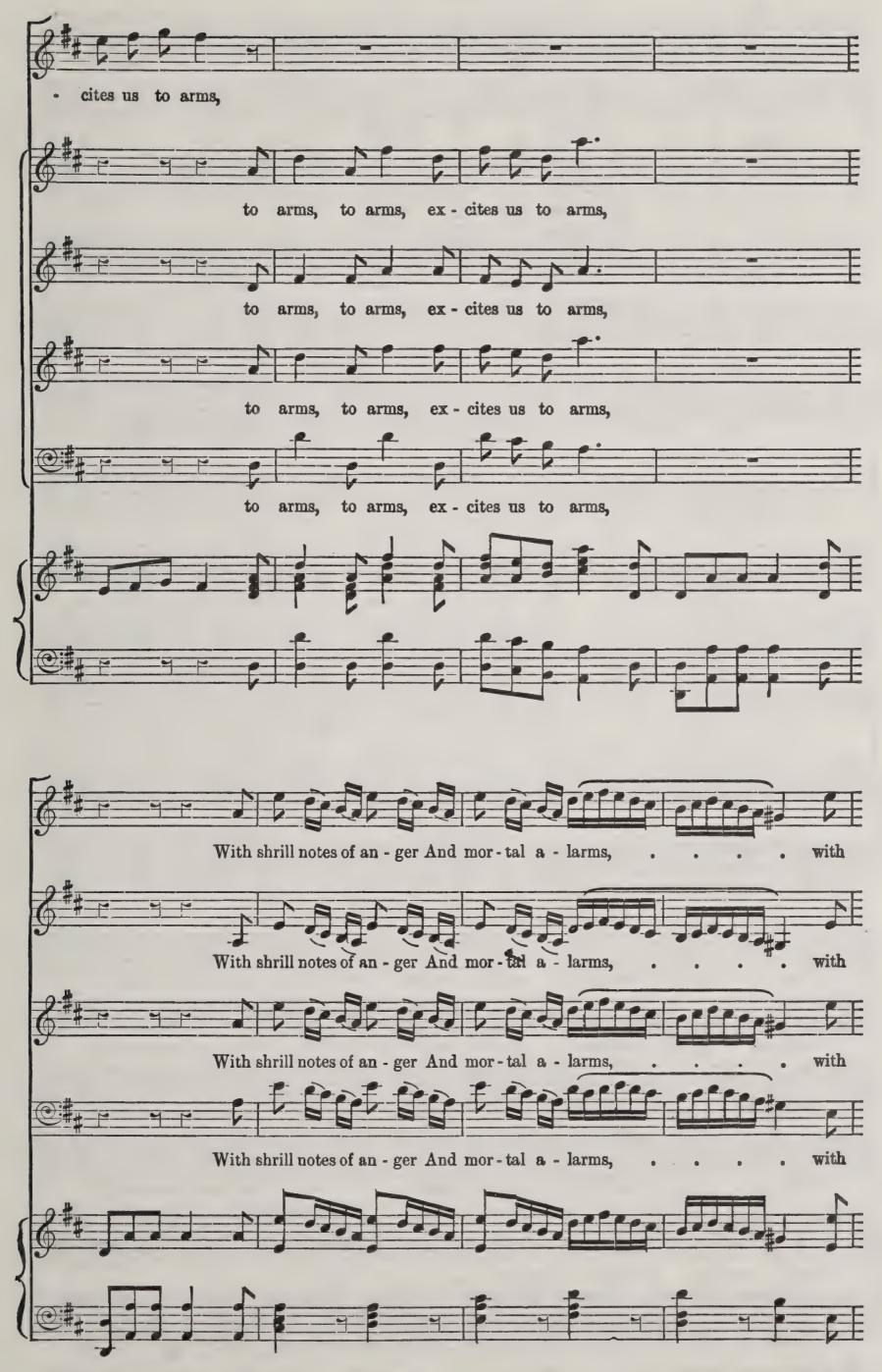
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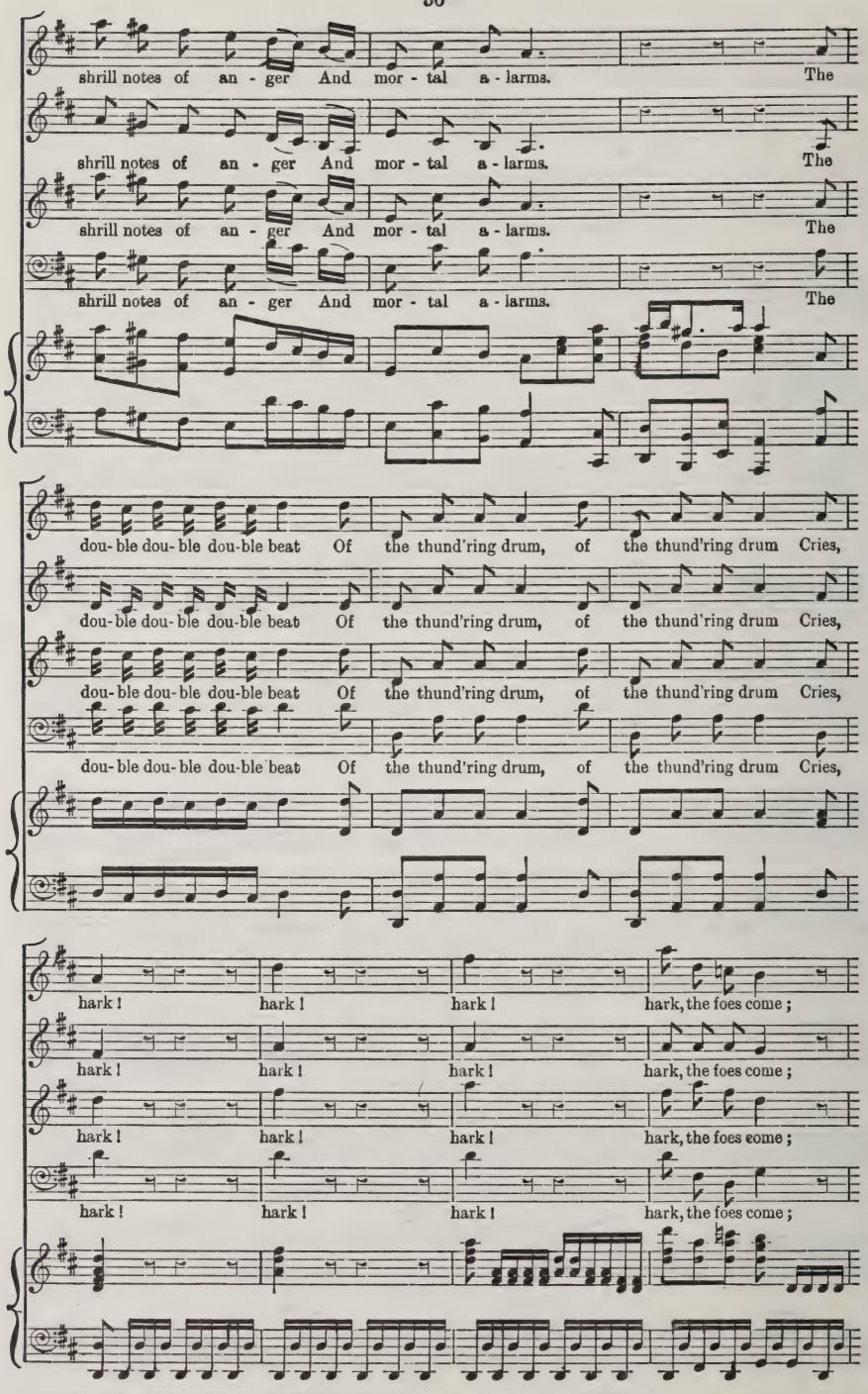






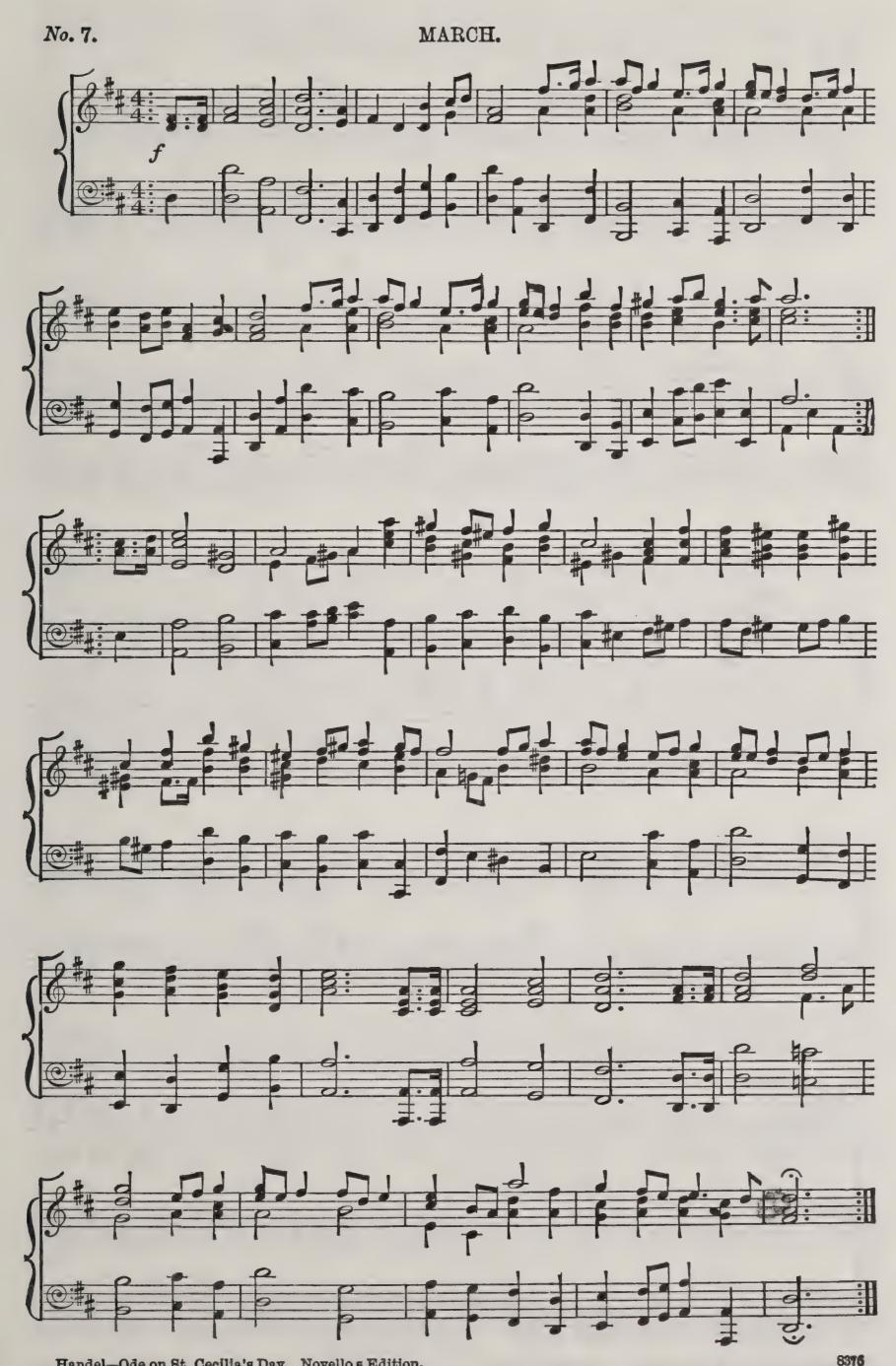


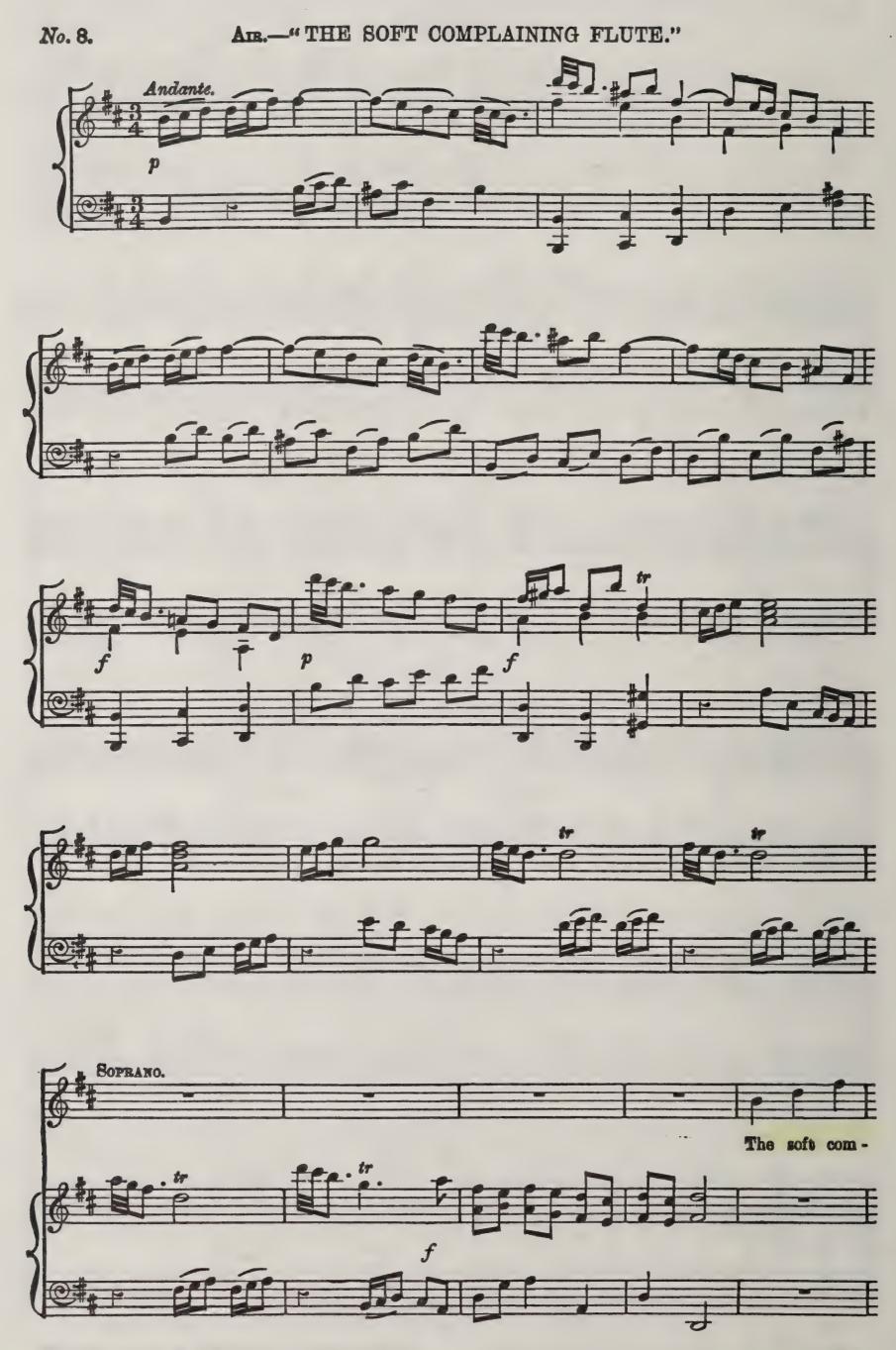




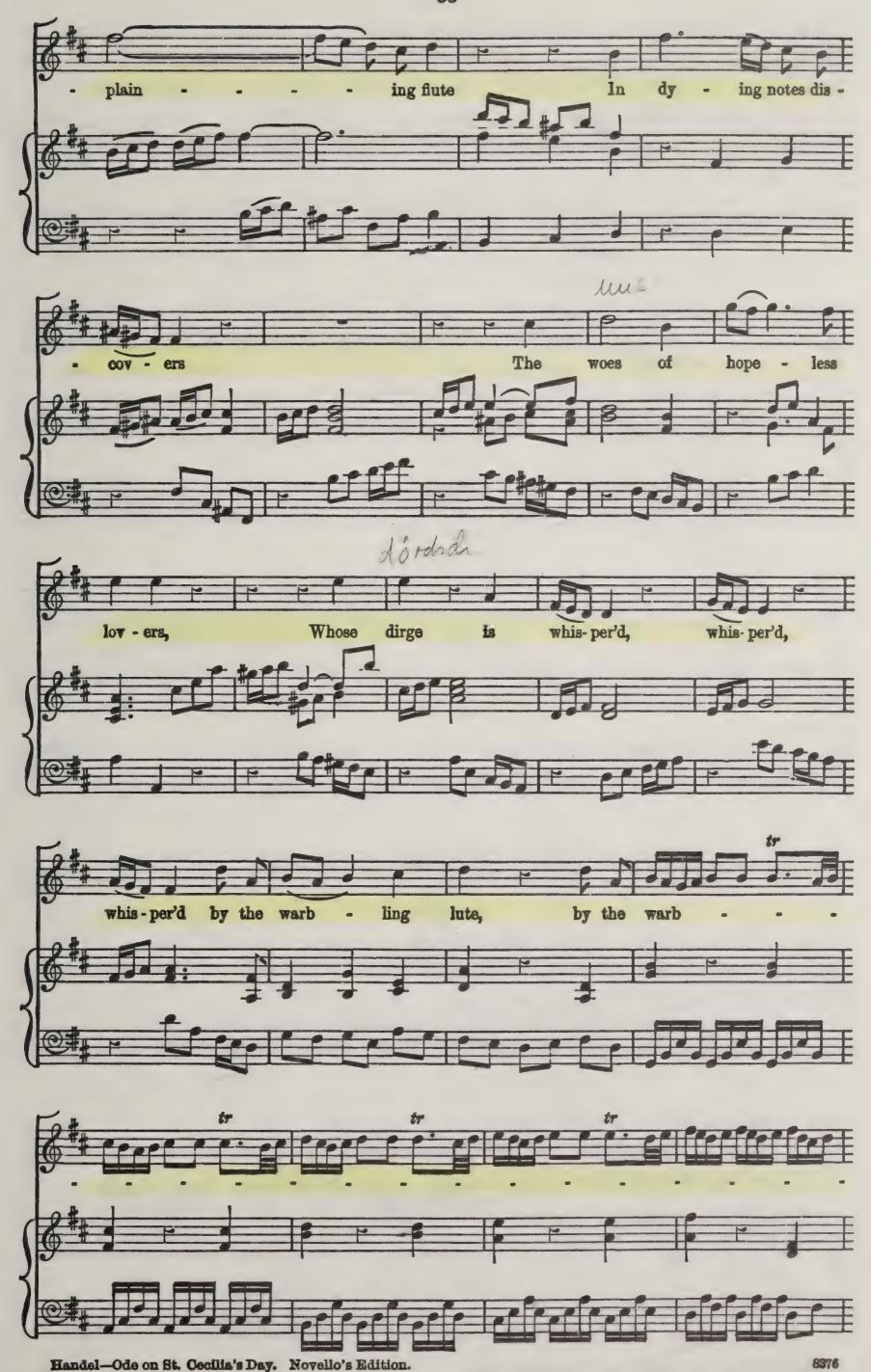


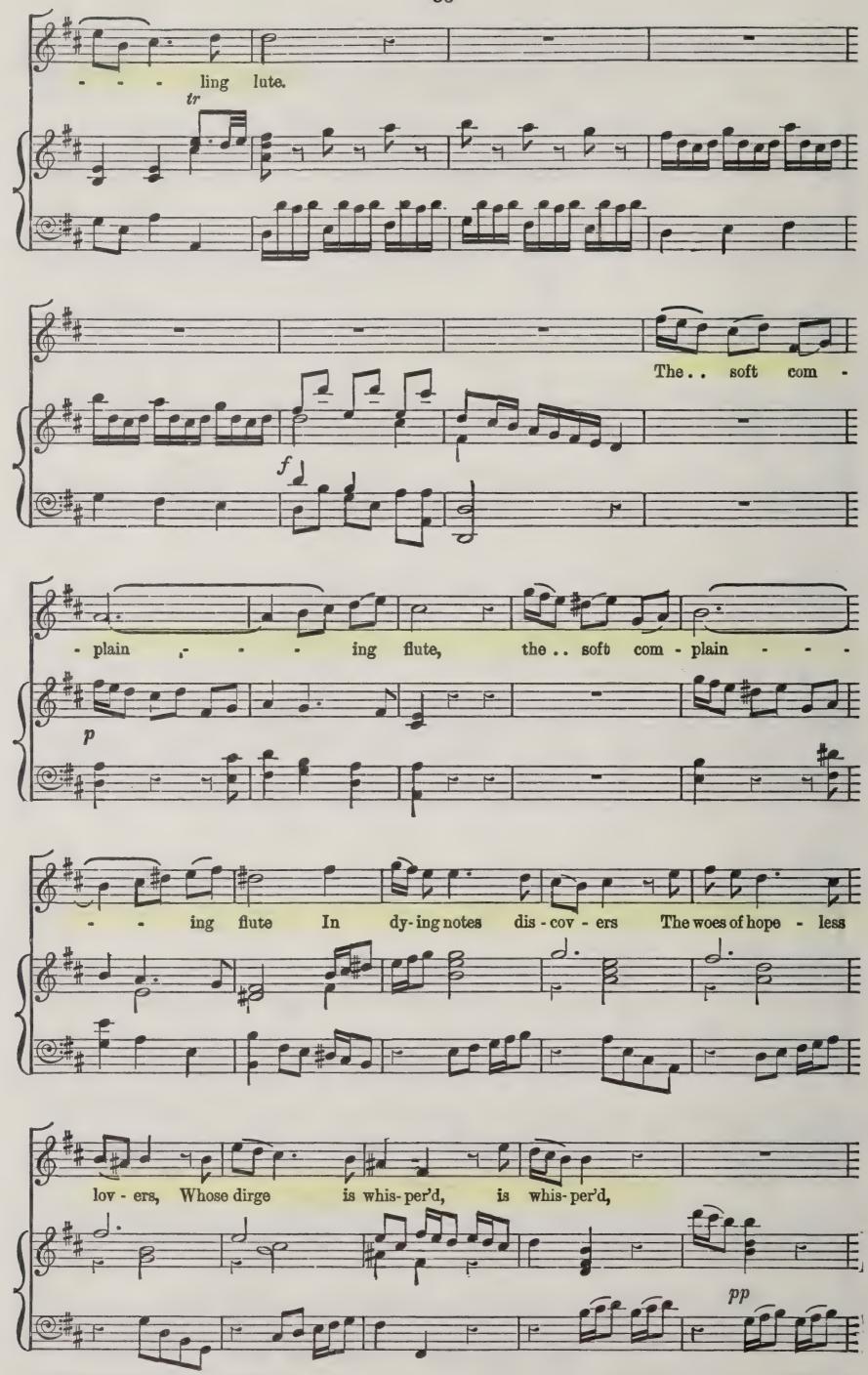


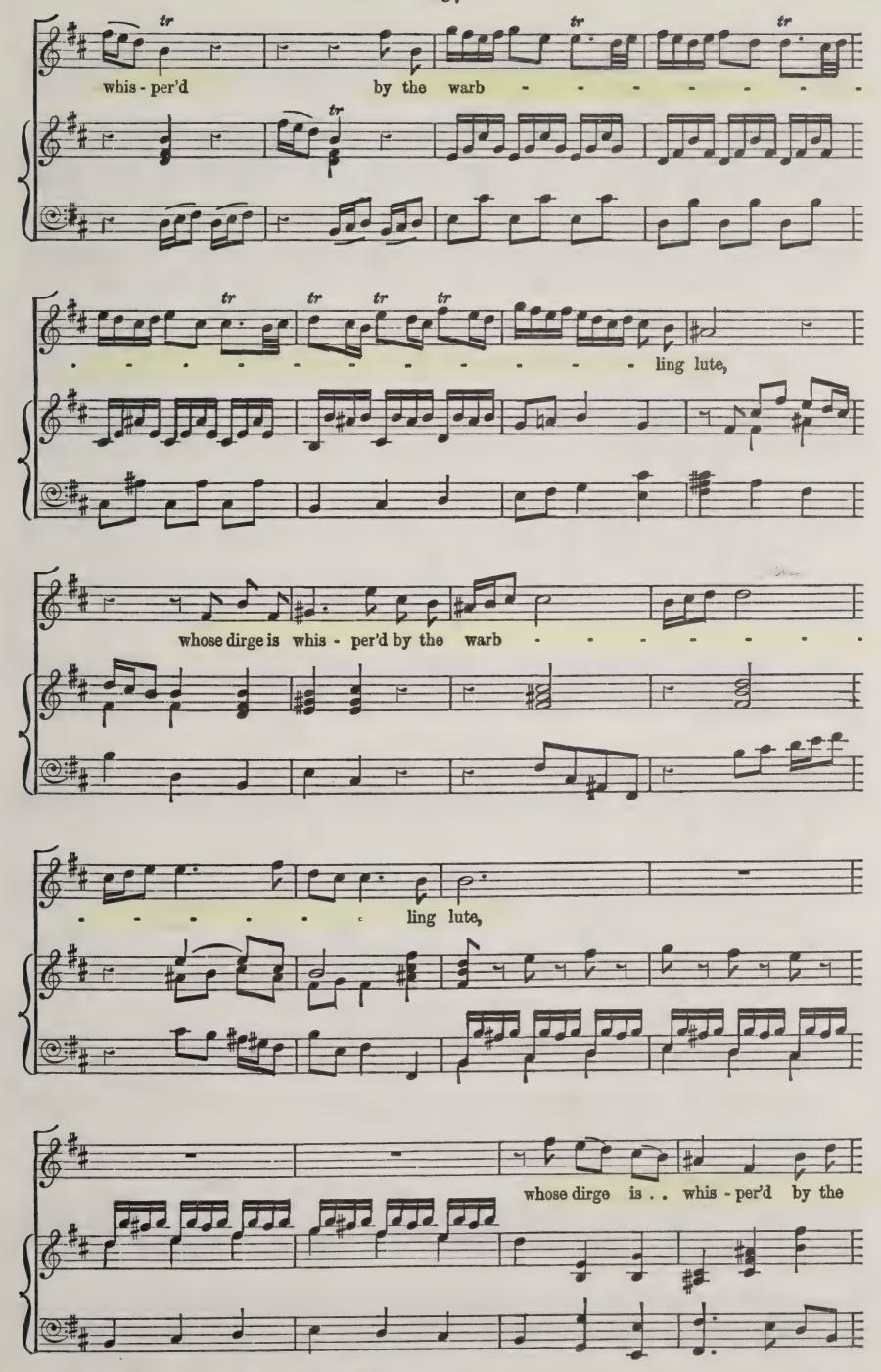


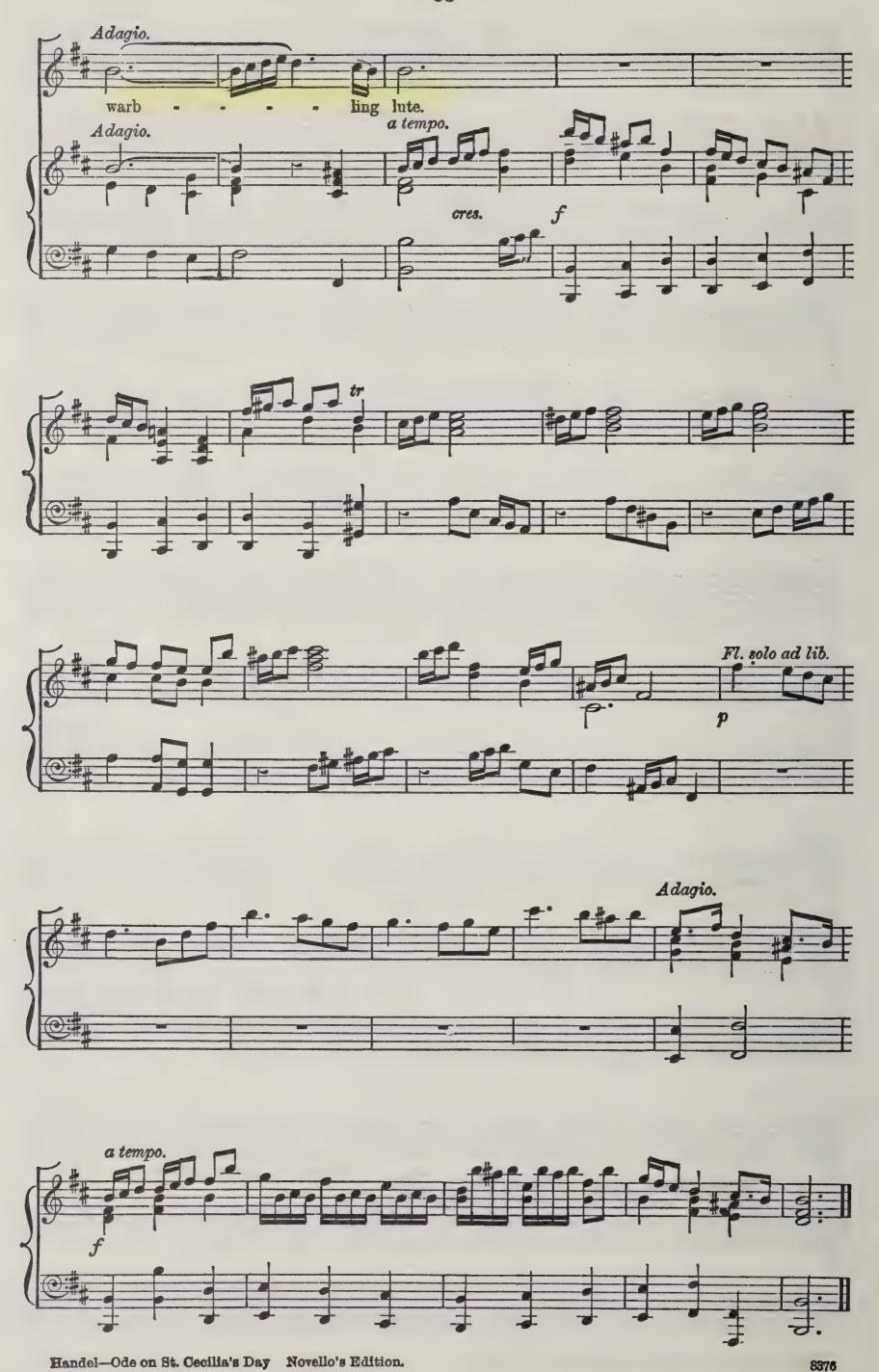


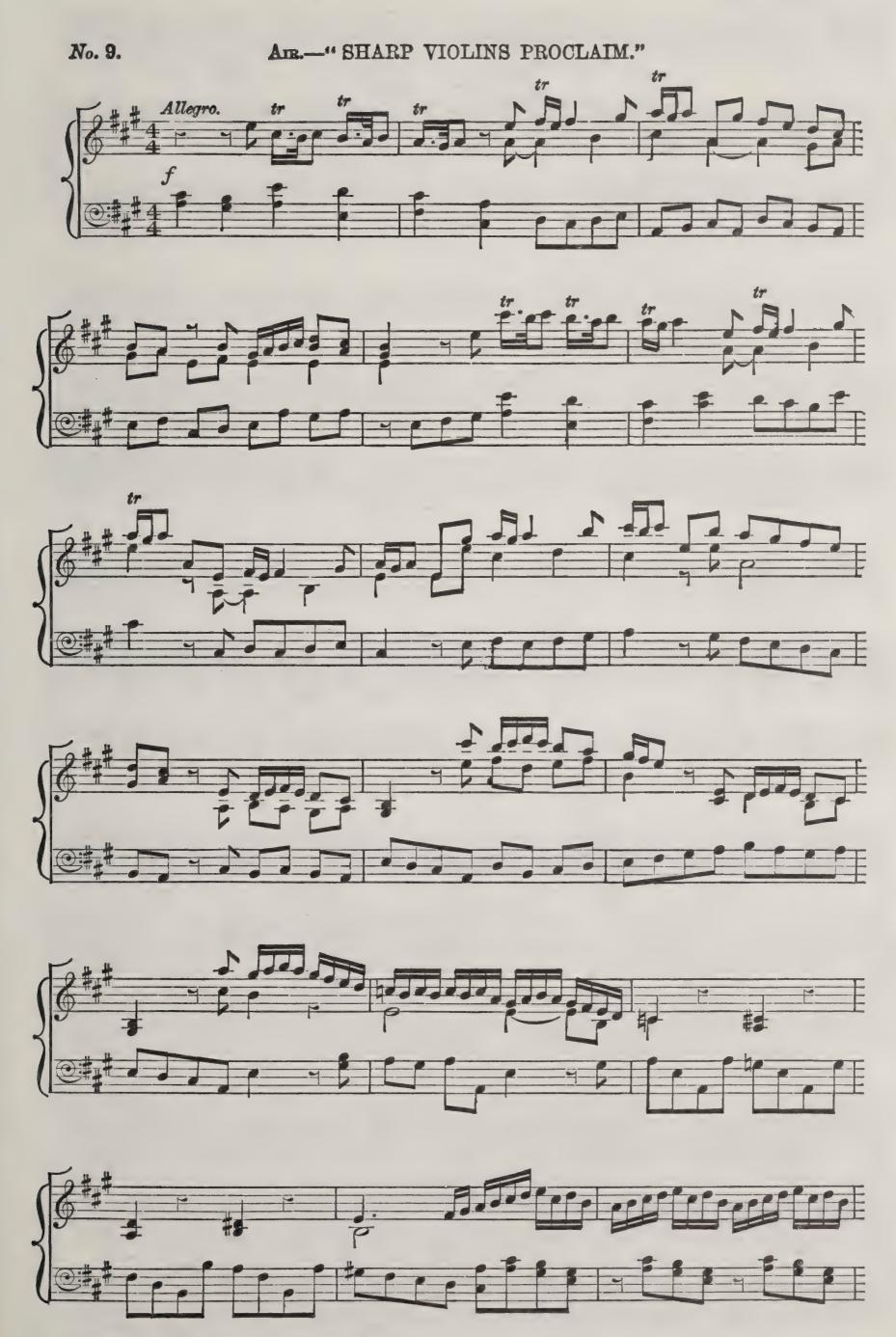
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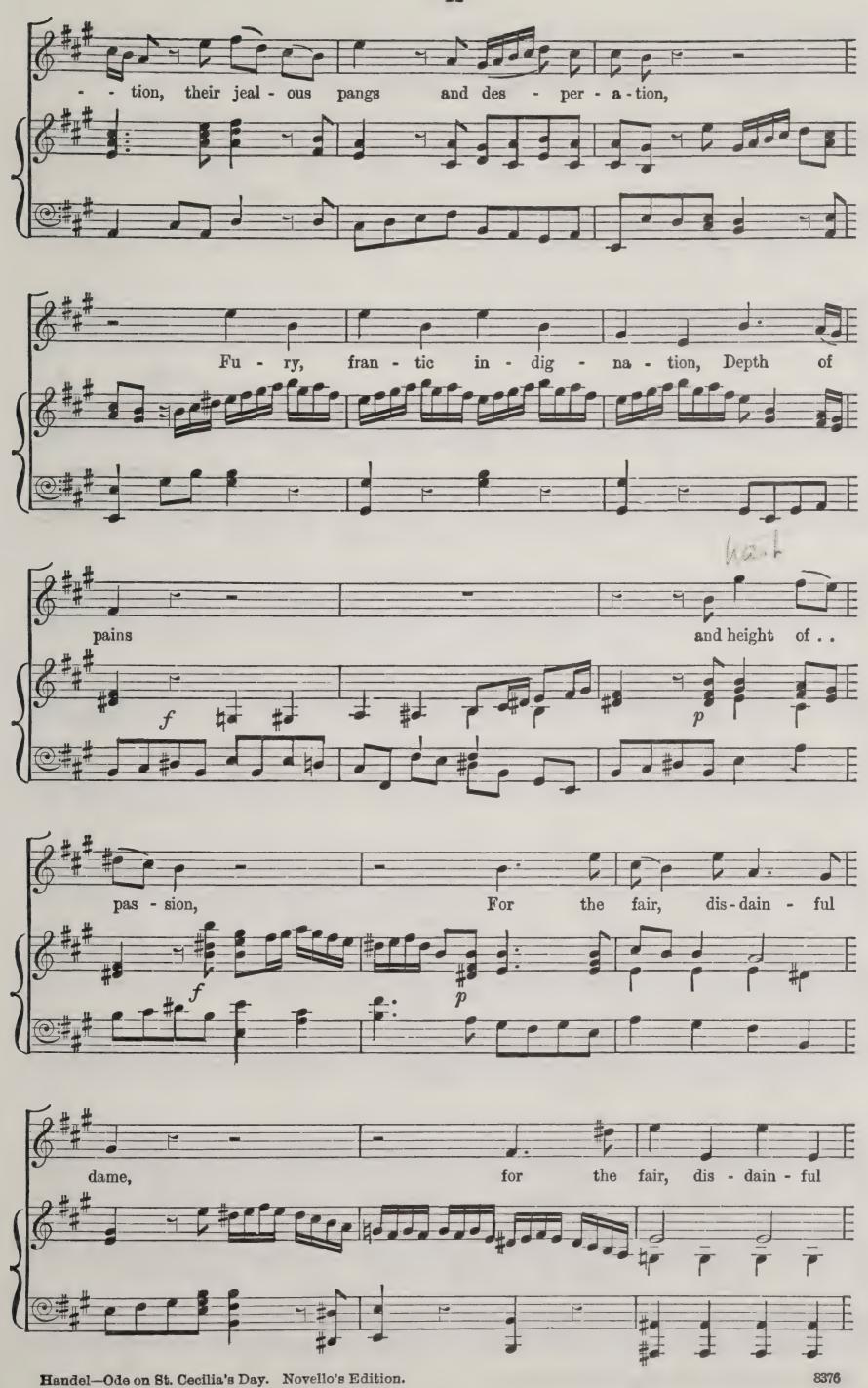




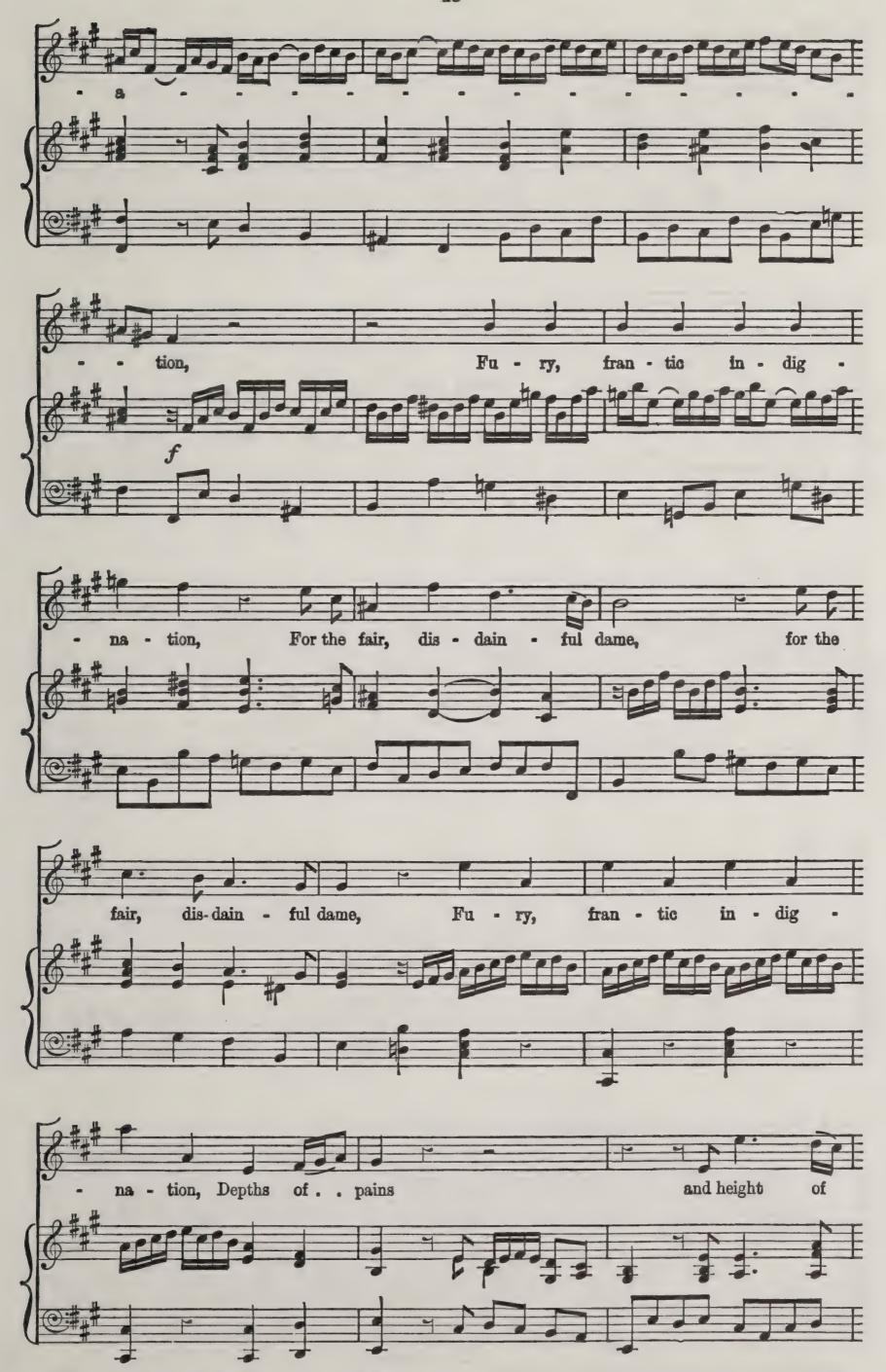






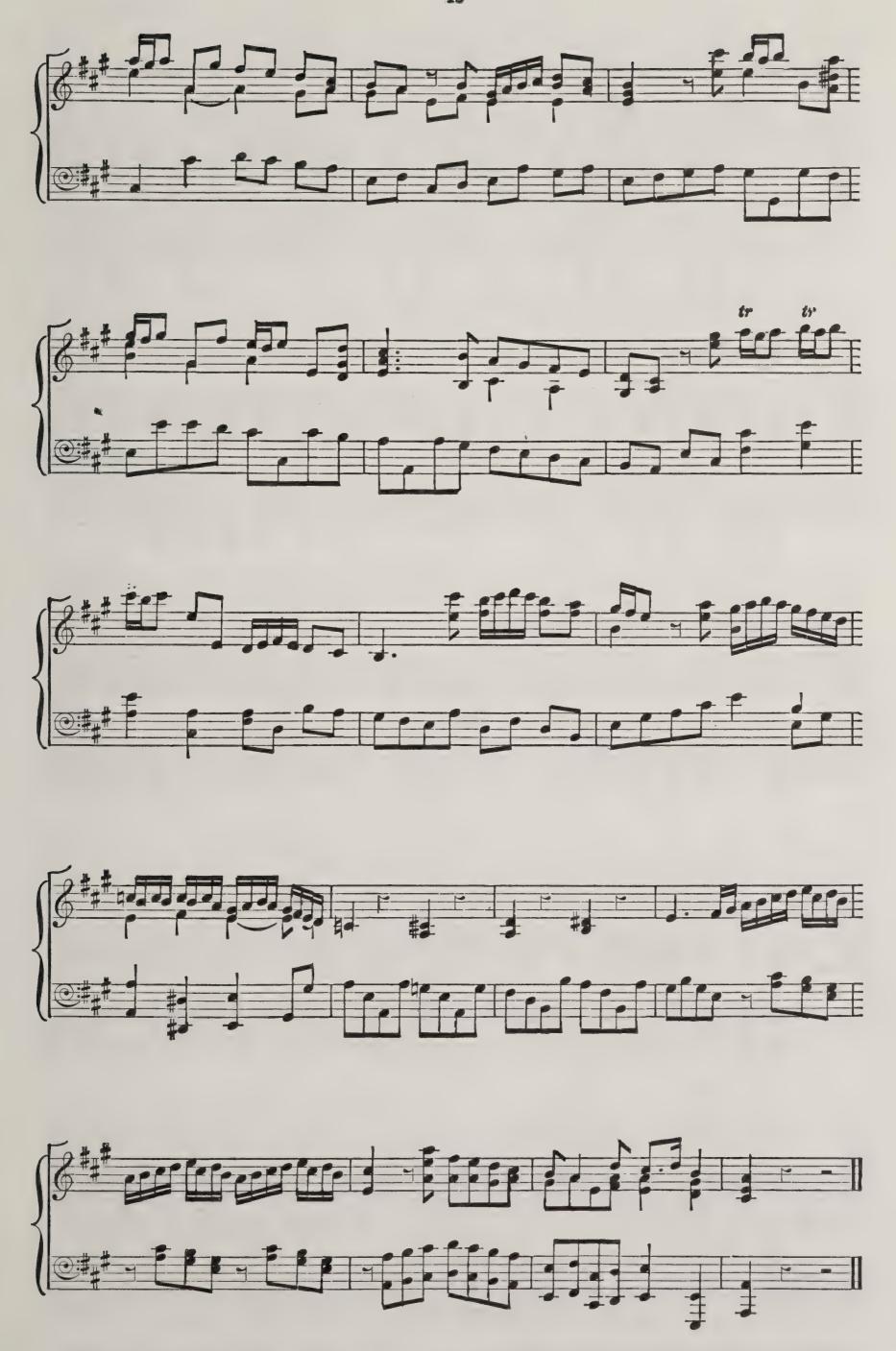






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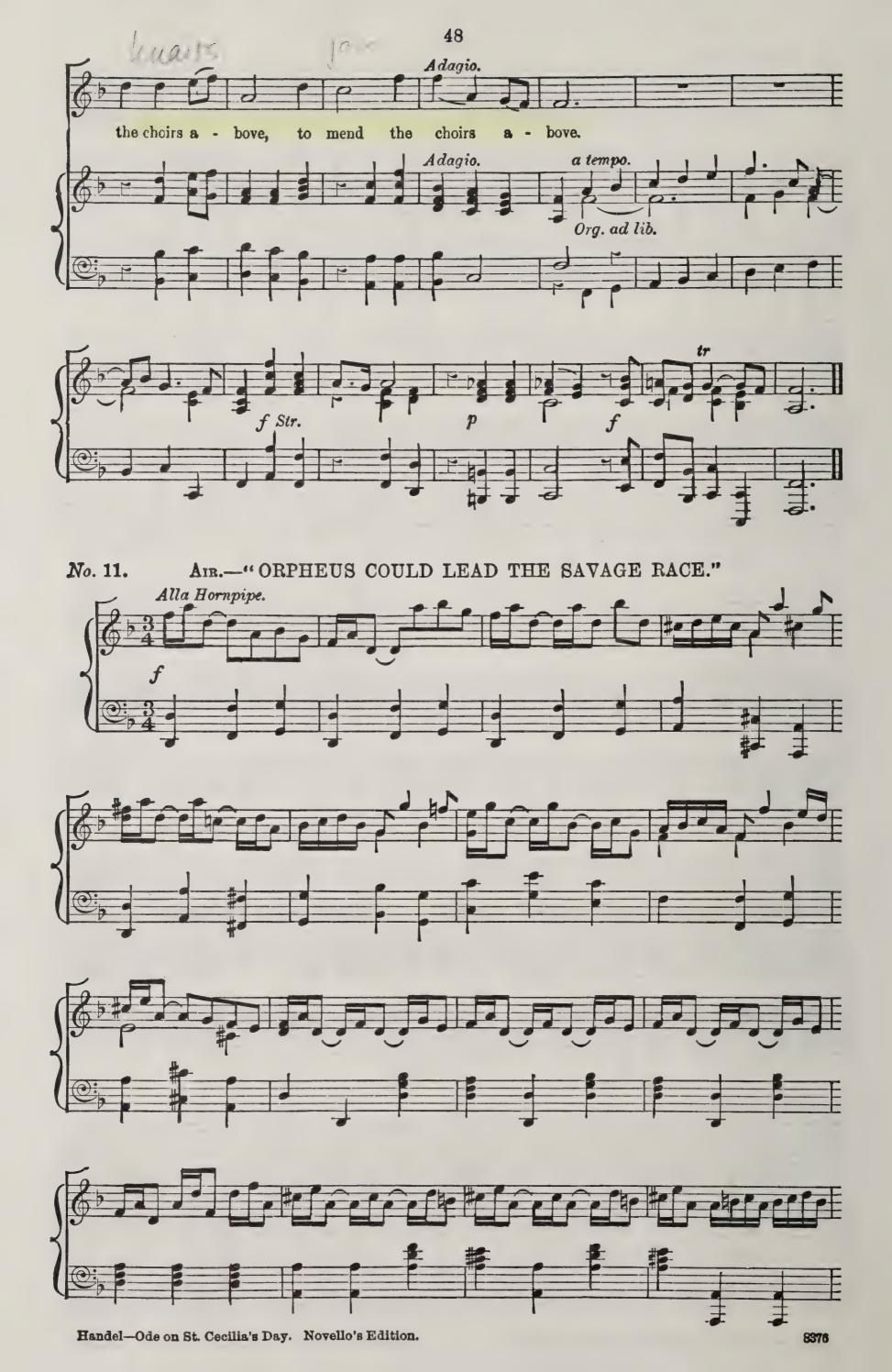




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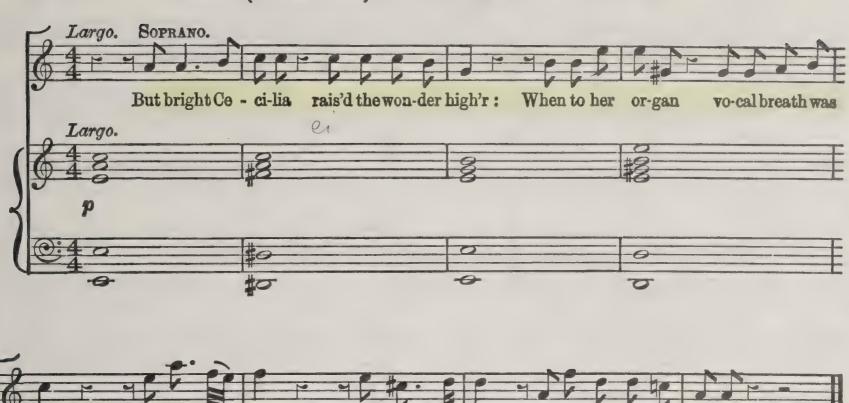


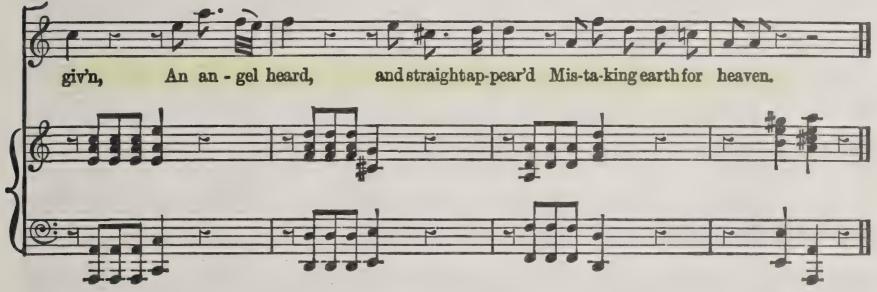






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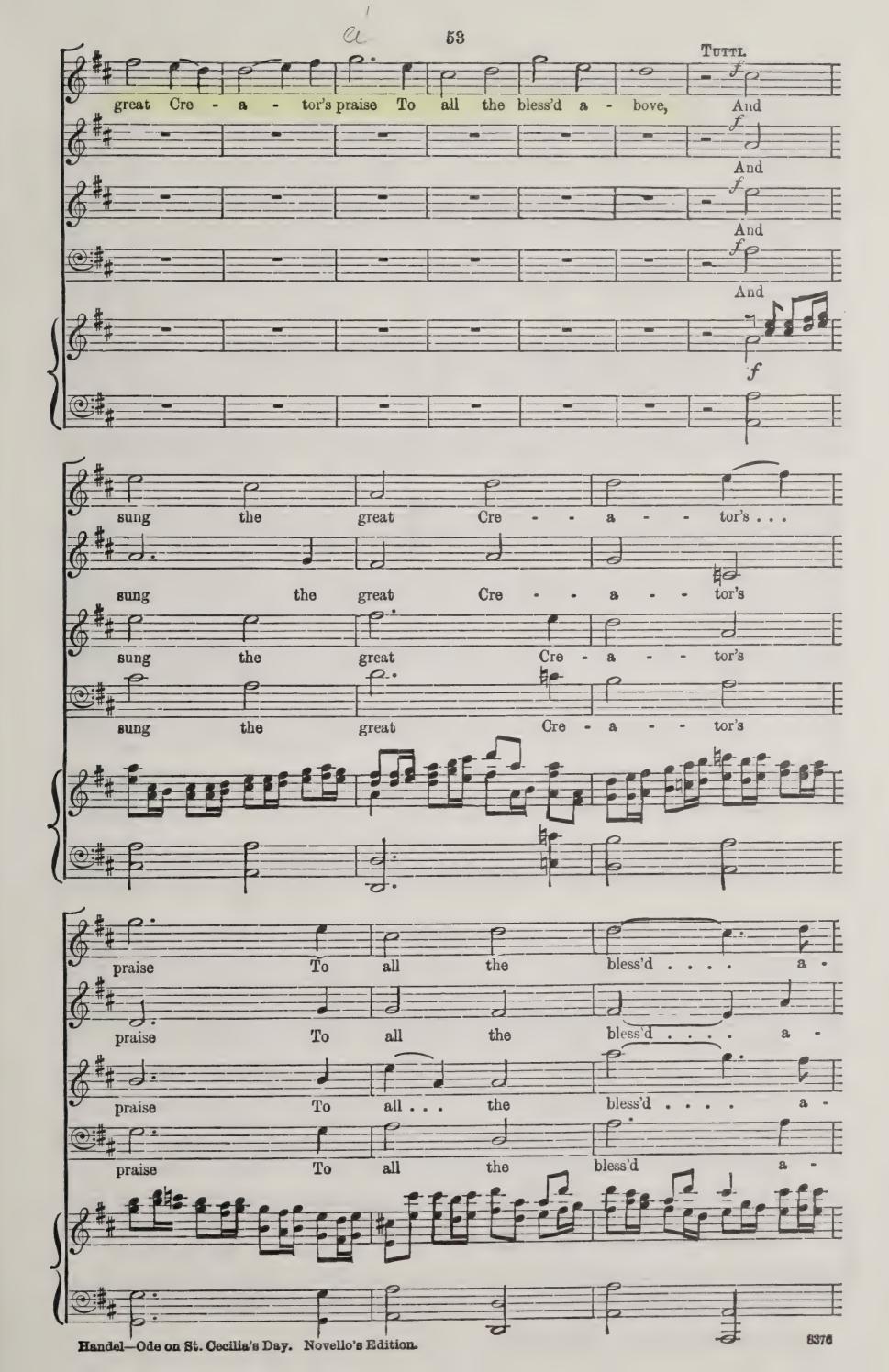


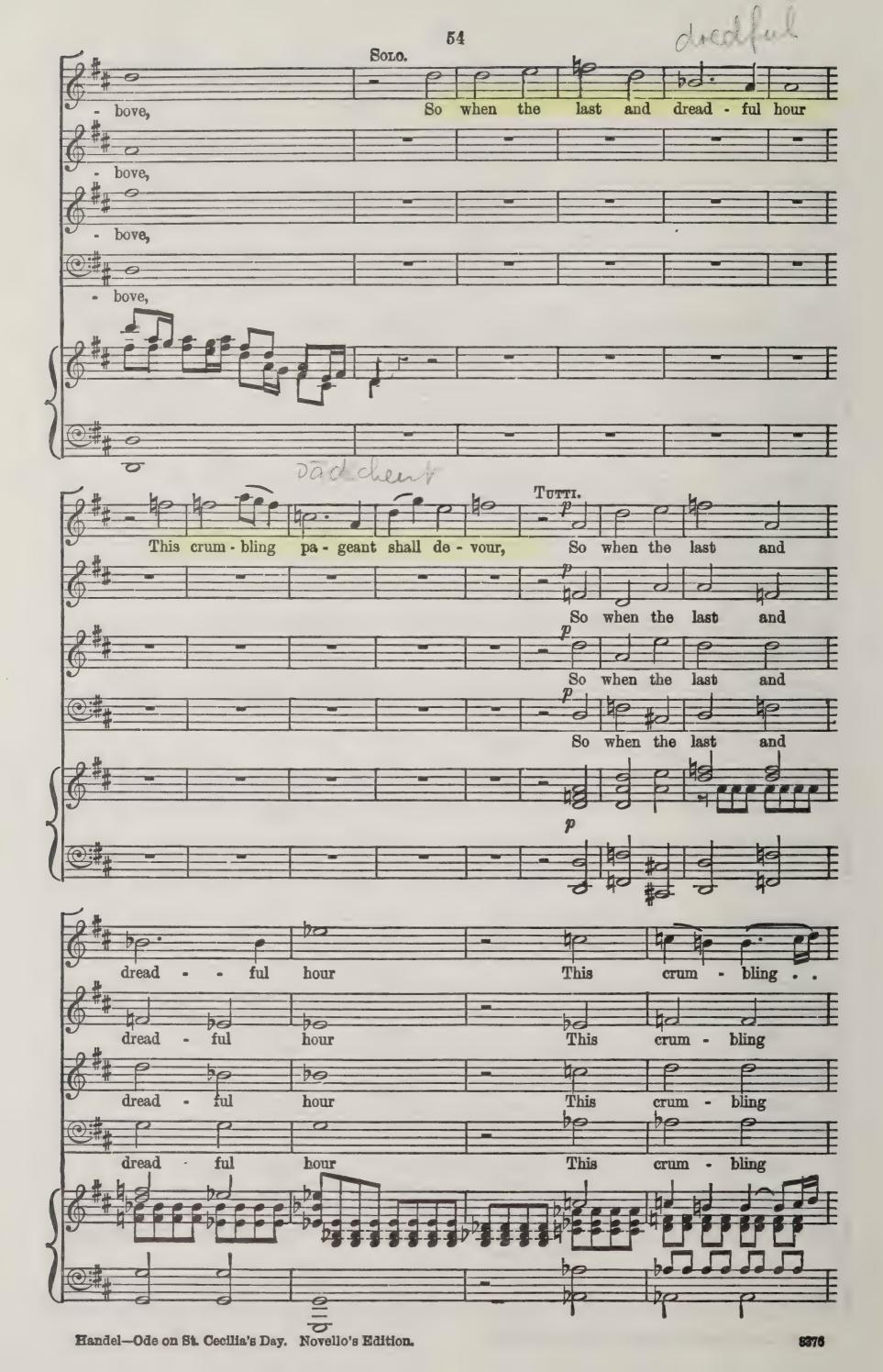


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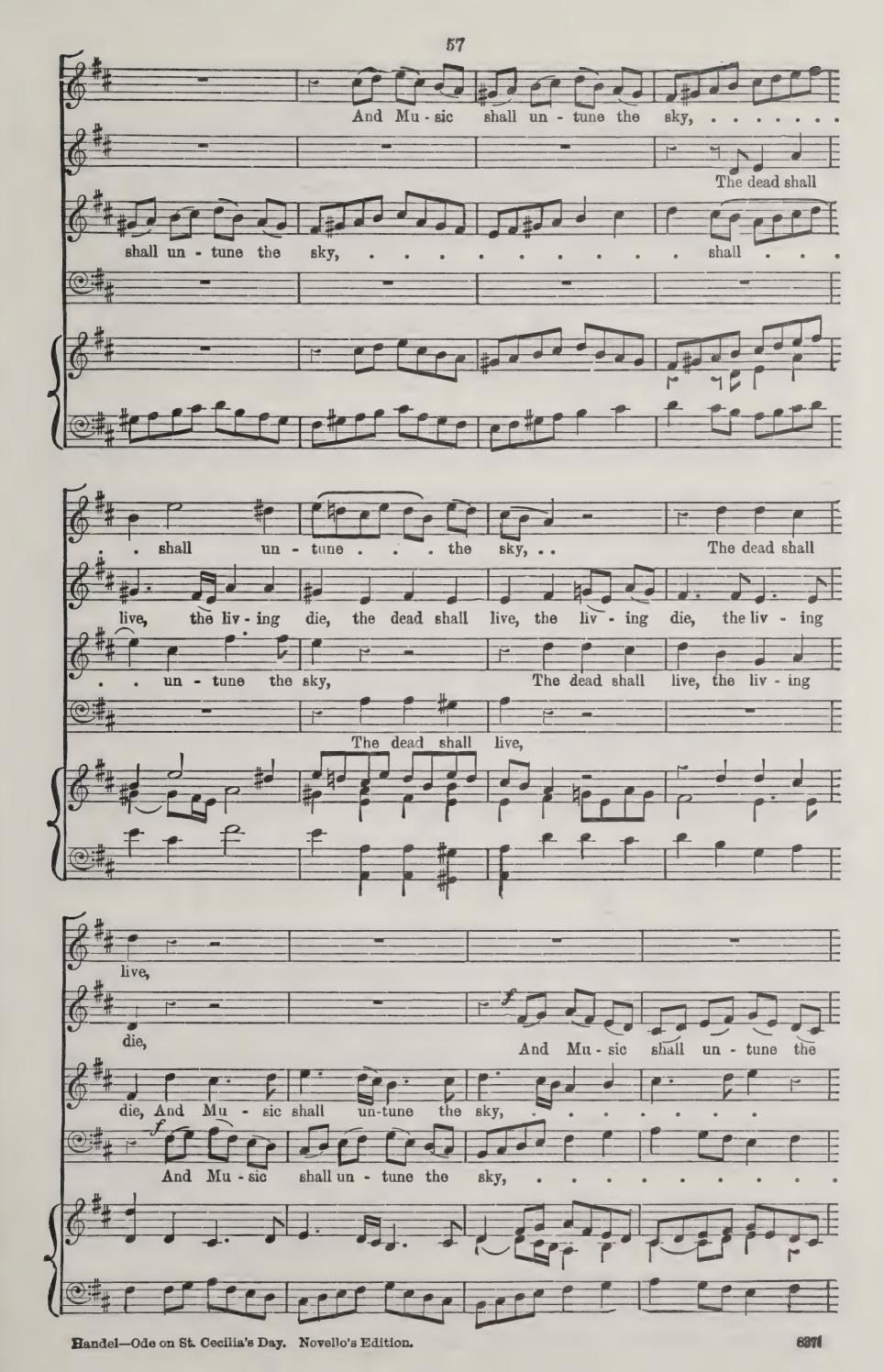




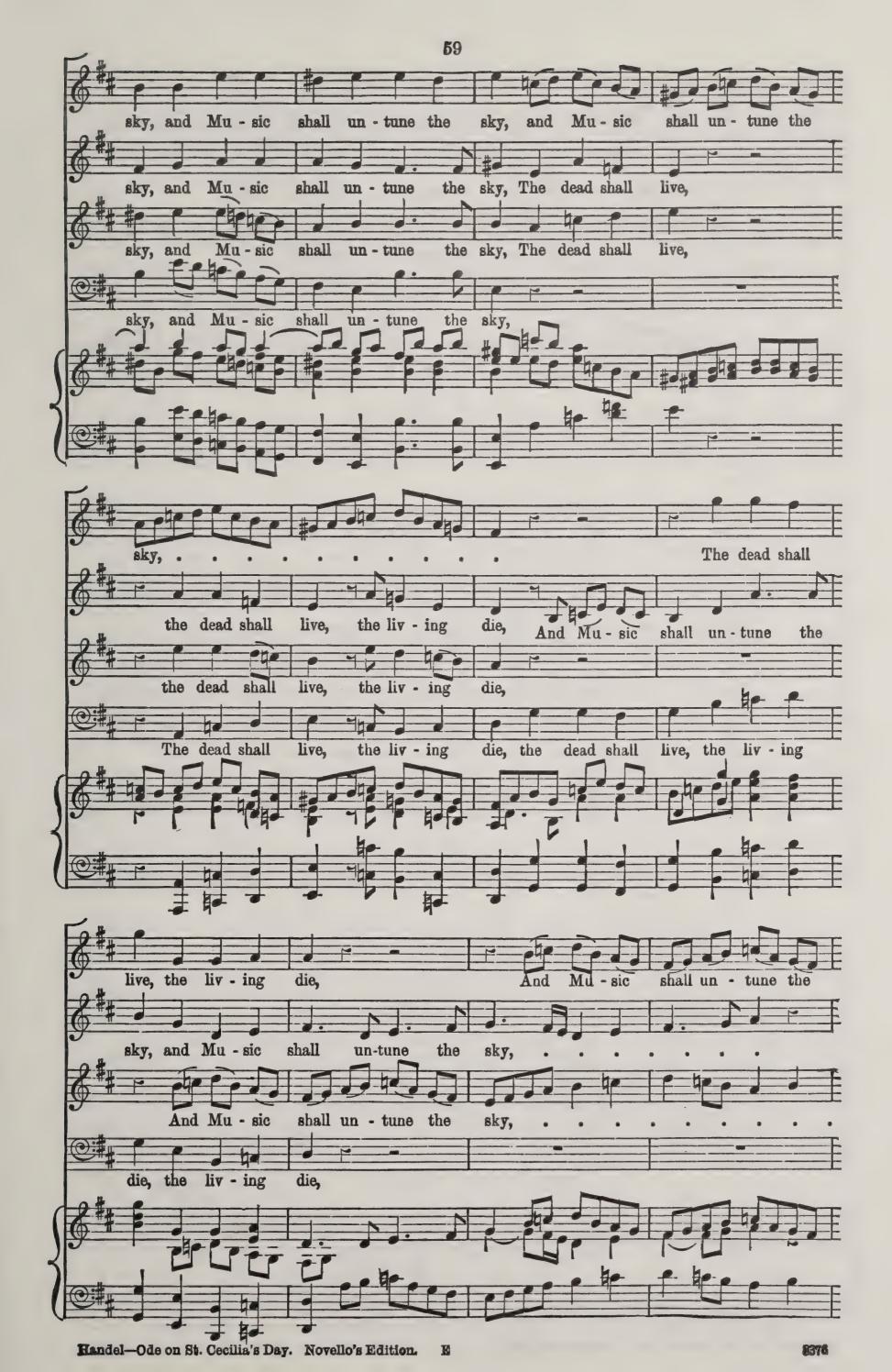


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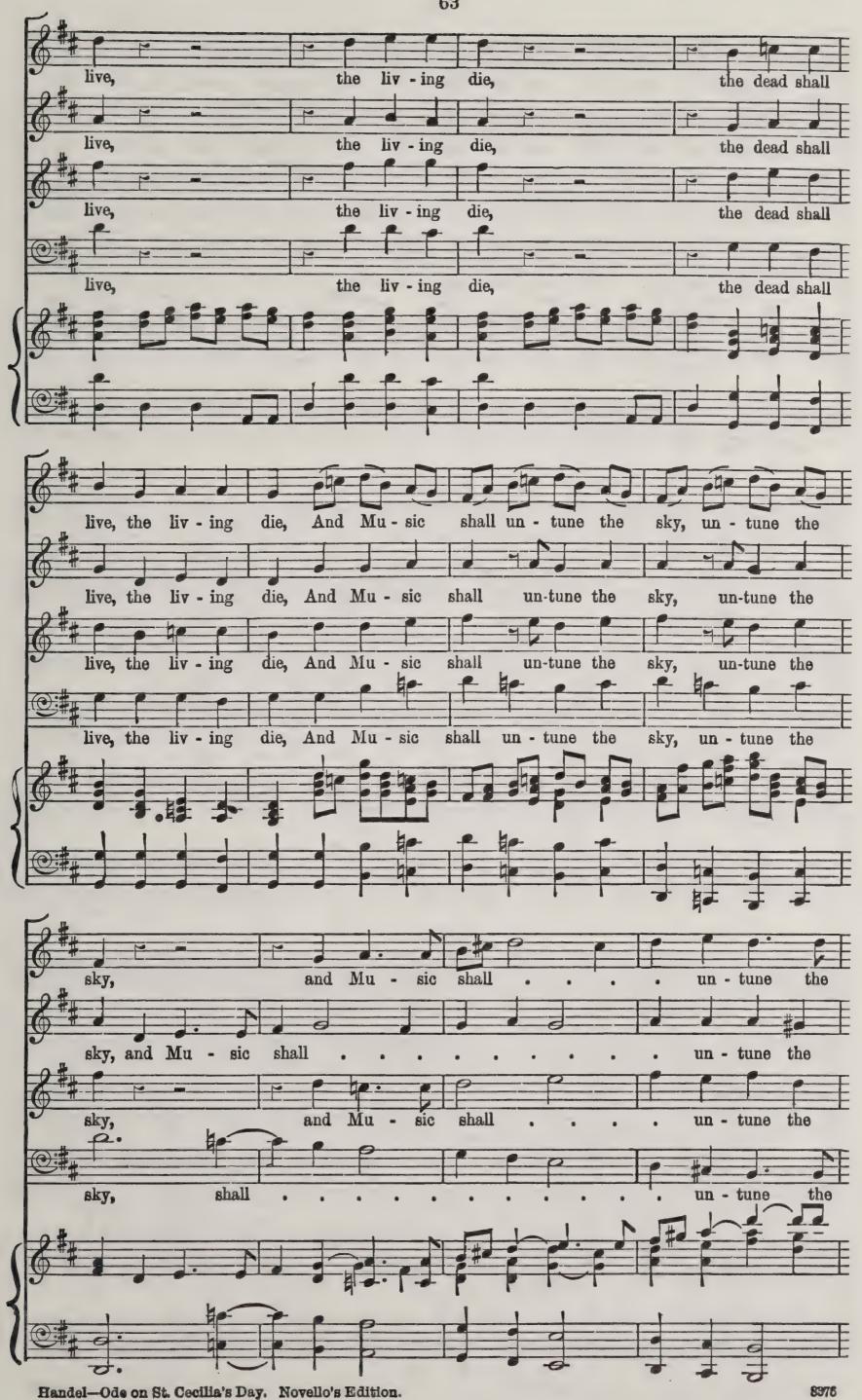




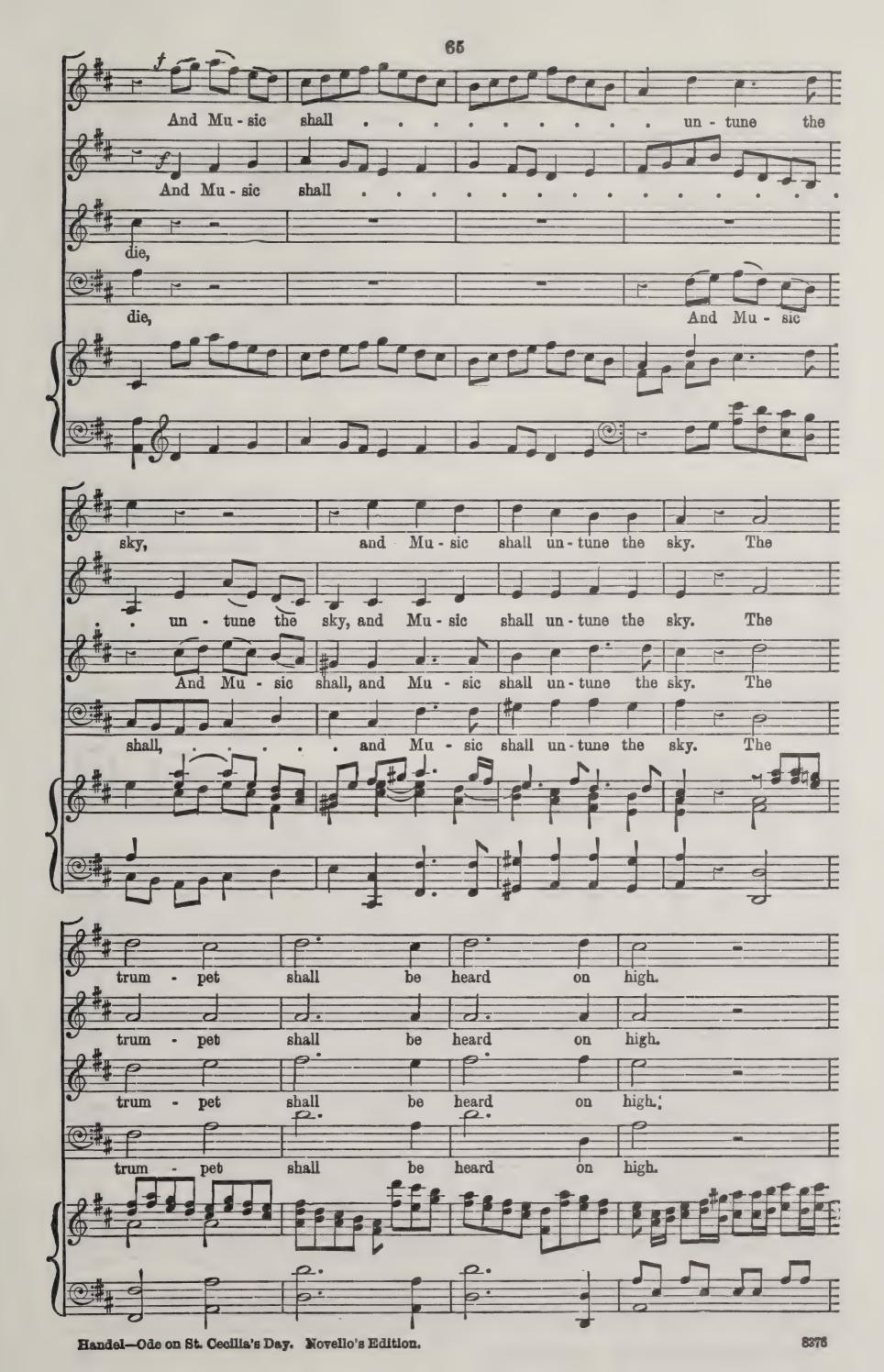


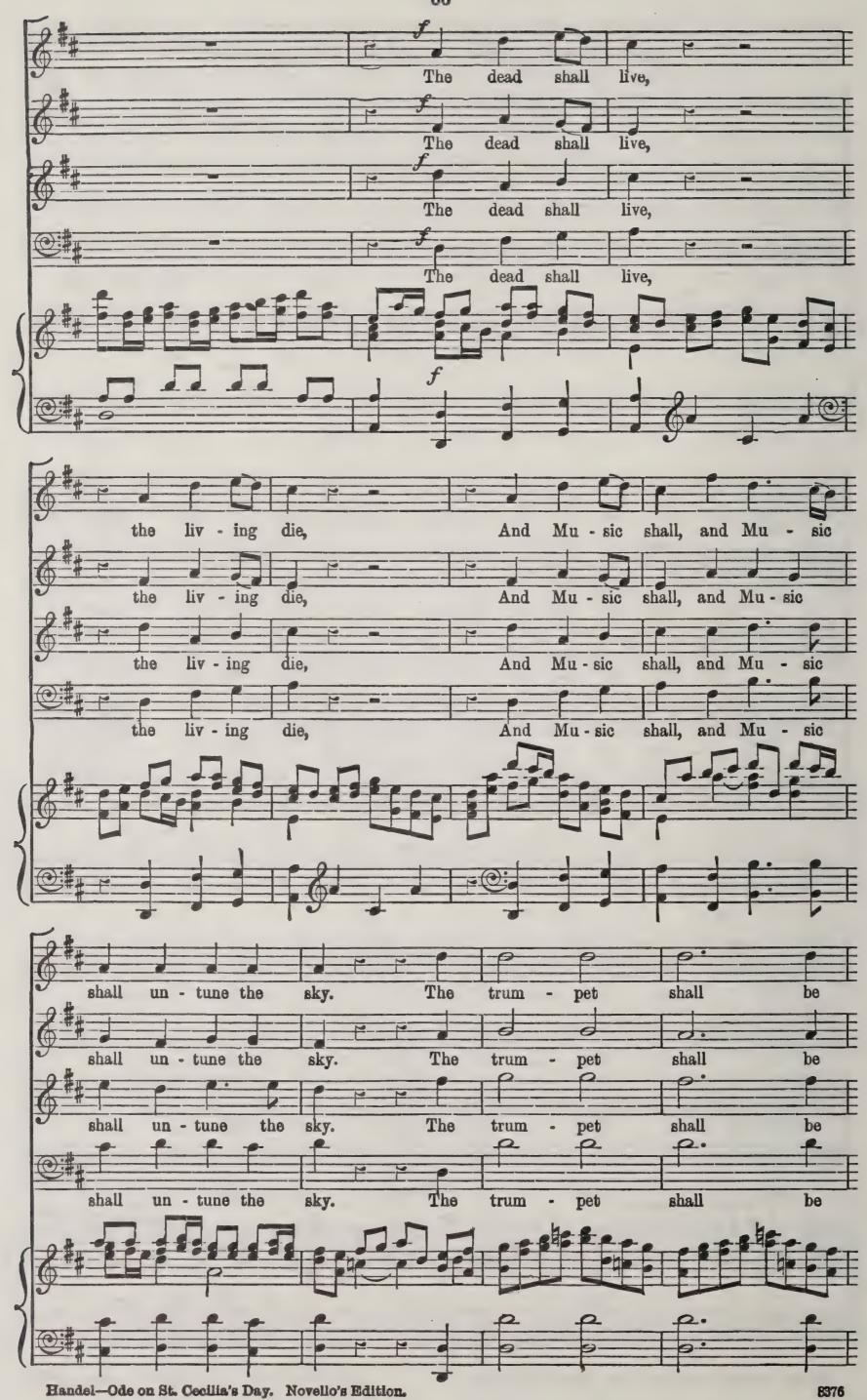
















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